



Project Summary

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► Resilient Communities; Climate and Energy Equity; Safe, Accessible Homes

Summary: Equitable Decarbonization

Building energy consumption contributed approximately 35% of the nation's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2019 — and up to 75% in denser cities like New York City — making them a prime candidate for decarbonization (Worthen Foundation 2022). Low-income communities are disproportionately located near fossil fuel facilities and burdened by environmental pollution. Homes with high energy inefficiencies and difficulties in regulating temperature expose residents to mental and physical health risks (Hernandez 2016). Affordable housing tenants continue to be disproportionately impacted by health consequences caused by environmental injustice and resource extraction in their communities. Undertaking GHG reductions requires significant investment and alignment of efforts from a regional scale to the city- and state- or other territories nationwide. Combined with the lingering consequences of structural racism in policy and resource allocation, housing infrastructure in urban and rural areas continue to face disadvantages when transitioning from oil or gas to electric and/or non-fossil fuel alternatives.

Approximately one-third of households in the United States are experiencing energy insecurity, the inability to meet basic household energy needs, with low-income, Black and Latino households disproportionately affected (Hernandez 2016). At the core of energy insecurity is a combination of physical housing conditions, household energy expenditures, and energy-related coping strategies paving the way for environmental, health, and social consequences (Hernandez 2016). To achieve a more equitable clean energy transition, policies, and resources can be leveraged to target underlying inequities in the current housing market — from ensuring housing remains affordable to reducing the energy burden on low- to moderate-income renters. Retrofitting existing affordable housing requires considerable funding since many lack the capital reserves to effectively cover project costs to design policies and financial incentives.



Climate Leadership and
Community Protection Act:
<https://climate.ny.gov>

Climate Justice Working
Group:
[https://climate.ny.gov/
Resources/
Climate-Justice-Working-
Group](https://climate.ny.gov/Resources/Climate-Justice-Working-Group)

Criteria for Disadvantaged
Communities:
[https://climate.ny.gov/
Resources/
Disadvantaged-
Communities-Criteria](https://climate.ny.gov/Resources/Disadvantaged-Communities-Criteria)

Climate Mobilization Act:
[https://climate.
cityofnewyork.us/subtopics/
buildings/](https://climate.cityofnewyork.us/subtopics/buildings/)

Several Significant Climate and Equity Legislations Shape the Landscape and Goals of New York State:

- In 2019, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) was signed into law to address climate change and GHG emissions in New York State. The legislation set emissions reduction goals to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 85% below 1990 levels by 2050, with the remaining 15% offset by other efforts. As part of the CLCPA, the Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG) was tasked with developing the **criteria for disadvantaged communities (DACs) to ensure an equitable transition from historically underserved frontline Communities.**
- Around the same time the CLCPA was passed, the Consolidated Laws of New York Chapter 43-B on Environmental Conservation was amended by adding Article 48, further defining environmental justice (EJ) and stipulating that environmental consequences should disproportionately burden no group. Aligned with this commitment to equity, before permit approval, **the Cumulative Impacts bill requires environmental impact statements where projects may lead to a disproportionate and/or inequitable burden on a disadvantaged community.** By creating the CJWG — New York has moved forward in identifying frontline communities that face disproportionate environmental burdens and defining which groups to prioritize in receiving the benefits of a clean energy transition.
- At the city level, New York City (NYC) Council passed the Climate Mobilization Act in April 2019, an ambitious legislative package representing NYC's commitment to carbon drawdown targets.

END NOTES:

Hernandez, D. (2016). Understanding 'Energy Insecurity' and Why It Matters to Health.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5114037/#R18>

Worthen Foundation (2022). The Building Decarbonization Practice Guide: A Zero Carbon Future for the Built Environment. Volume 1+2: Introduction. William J. Worthen Foundation.
<https://worthenfoundation.org/get-the-guide-bdpg>