



March 23, 2026

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY, 12224

Governor Hochul,

We are deeply concerned by your proposals to weaken and delay the implementation of the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. Now is not the time to retreat from a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or to walk back efforts to help New York transition to clean energy.

You have said that we need more time. The truth is this: we do not have time.

We know that carbon dioxide levels must remain at 350 parts per million (ppm) to maintain a stable climate and avoid catastrophic warming. We surpassed that level about forty years ago. When the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act was signed into law on July 18, 2019, setting a goal of a 40% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 (from 1990 levels), carbon dioxide levels had risen to 412-413ppm. Today they are around 430 ppm. This is not sustainable.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has determined that we have until 2030 to dramatically reduce fossil fuel consumption if we are to avoid a climate catastrophe. Yet you are now proposing to delay enforcing the climate law until 2030. Such a delay would be certain to cause even more damage to the climate and greater suffering, especially for those New Yorkers who can least afford to ameliorate the effects of climate change. According to the IPCC, "any further delay in concerted global action will miss a brief and rapidly closing window to secure a livable future." We cannot over emphasize how serious and how urgent this crisis is. Every year that passes without a drastic reduction in global emissions makes catastrophe more certain.

Many of the other challenges that we face — immigration, housing, human health, hunger, regional conflicts— will all be greatly exacerbated by the climate crisis. The world has already warmed nearly 1.5 degrees, and appears on track to rise above 2 degrees by the end of the century, if not sooner. Some analysts are anticipating a world that has warmed at least 3 degrees, a scenario that would render parts of the world uninhabitable and unleash vast economic devastation.

In the New Testament, the writer of the first letter of John asks, "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" (I John 3:17) Today we also need to ask, "How does God's love abide in anyone who sees what is happening to our climate and the suffering it will cause our brothers and sisters, and yet fails to act?"

We urge you, for the sake of our brothers and sisters, especially those most vulnerable among us, to reconsider your decision and instead make every effort to implement the Climate Law, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and help us transition to renewable energy before it is too late.

Sincerely,

Rev. John D. Paarlberg, Chair of the NY State Council of Churches Environmental Justice Working Group

Ms. Rashida Tyler, Acting Executive Director, NY State Council of Churches

cc: Speaker Carl E. Heastie
Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins