

**Joint Advocacy and Outreach Committee**  
of the  
**CLIMATE PSYCHIATRY ALLIANCE**  
and  
**CLIMATE PSYCHOLOGY ALLIANCE - NORTH AMERICA**

January 28, 2026

Committee on Environmental Conservation  
State of New York

Dear Committee Members,

We are mental health professionals who reside, practice, and teach within New York State. We also represent two national groups that are deeply concerned about climate change and its impacts on patients, families, and communities. The Climate Psychology Alliance - North America ([www.climatepsychology.us](http://www.climatepsychology.us)), which was established as a 501(c)(3) organization in 2018 and has about 500 members, and the Climate Psychiatry Alliance ([www.climatepsychiatry.org](http://www.climatepsychiatry.org)), which was established as a 501(c)(3) organization in 2019 and has about 850 members, are both dedicated to educating professionals, policymakers, and the public about the mental health and social dimensions of climate change and to developing and advocating for constructive responses at local and national levels.

A substantial body of research demonstrates that climate change leads to or exacerbates a broad range of mental and behavioral health conditions (including depression, anxiety, trauma, and substance misuse) and social problems (including lower academic performance, interpersonal conflict, domestic violence, economic disruptions, and forced migrations). These effects arise from extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and floods, as well as from longer-term climate trends, such as rising temperatures and sea levels. Consistent with research findings, our members' clinical experience shows that patients' concerns about climate change and its impacts can be primary sources of distress and amplify other mental health symptoms.<sup>1</sup> Our own small group of clinicians/mental health advocates in NY state have met with patients and community-based teen groups who have provided us with direct insights about the fear of

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<sup>1</sup> For summaries of recent research and discussion, see: American Psychological Association (2022), *Addressing the Climate Crisis: An Action Plan for Psychologists* (<https://www.apa.org/science/about/publications/climate-crisis-action-plan.pdf>); Clayton, S., et al. (2021), *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Inequities, Responses*, American Psychological Association & ecoAmerica (<https://ecoamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/mental-health-climate-change-2021-ea-apa.pdf>); and Crandon, T.J., et al. (2022), The clinical implications of climate change for mental health, *Nature Human Behavior*, 6, 1474-1481 (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-022-01477-6>). For work specifically on youth, see also: Hickman, C. et al. (2021), Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: A global survey, *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(12), E863-E873 ([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext)).

climate change as well as the demoralizing effects of visible pollution and the fear of unavoidable health hazards from microplastics. In short, the environmental crisis is a health crisis. And any health crisis requires a comprehensive, and interdisciplinary approach to effectively meet demands and mitigate risk.

Local governments can play important roles in addressing the mental health and social dimensions of climate change. Examples of initiatives that the Environmental Committee and Governor Hochul could pursue include:

- Conducting a state-wide assessment of the current impacts of climate change on mental and behavioral health and community well-being, and projections of future trends, with attention to variations across wards and neighborhoods and to disparities among population groups (as characterized by socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, abilities, and other dimensions). **To this end, we support New York State’s groundbreaking Sustainable Futures Fund to remain fully funded, with social and emotional components included as part and parcel of climate resilience infrastructure.**
- Supporting the development of community resilience programs that help individuals and households build the psychological, social, and practical skills and community connections needed to respond effectively to climate change and other challenges.<sup>2</sup> **We support the full implementation of S8158A, the Climate Resilient NY Act, and encourage the legislature to expand climate resilience goals and budget appropriations to include goals for mental health and wellbeing.**
- Advising businesses and non-profit organizations on how to incorporate considerations of the mental health and social impacts of climate change and environmental conservation into their strategies, operations, and employee services. For example, businesses should be aware of and take responsibility for their contribution towards plastic pollution, which

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<sup>2</sup> Community resilience programs may involve collaborations among well-being public, non-profit, and for-profit entities. These programs may take various forms, including resilience hubs (Urban Sustainability Directors Network, [resilience-hub.org](https://resilience-hub.org)) and the resilience coordinating networks described in the proposed federal Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Act of 2023 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/3073>). See also: Doppelt, B. (2023), *Preventing and Healing Climate Traumas: A Guide to Building Resilience and Hope in Communities*, Taylor & Francis/Routledge ([www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781003262442/preventing-healing-climate-traumas-bob-doppelt](https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781003262442/preventing-healing-climate-traumas-bob-doppelt)).

<sup>3</sup> Lewandowski, R. E., Clayton, S. D., Olbrich, L., Sakshaug, J. W., Wray, B., Schwartz, S. E., ... & Van Susteren, L. (2024). Climate emotions, thoughts, and plans among US adolescents and young adults: a cross-sectional descriptive survey and analysis by political party identification and self-reported exposure to severe weather events. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 8(11), e879-e893. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(24\)00229-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(24)00229-8)

<sup>4</sup> Fang SJ, Yin ZD, Li LF, Cai Q, Zheng PF, Chen LZ. Overall effects of microplastics on the brain. *Front Toxicol*. 2025 Nov 20;7:1619096. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12675269/>

can add to global warming and which has independent effects on mental health. <sup>4</sup>  
**Towards this goal, we support enactment of The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (Glick [A1749](#)/Harckham [S1464](#)).**

- Sponsoring training for health care and social service providers across the state on the mental health and social impacts of climate change on individuals, families, and communities and how to prevent and treat them.
- Developing effective communications about climate change and health for (a) community members, including messaging for specific communities at risk of climate impacts, and (b) professional audiences, such as climate and energy professionals and health professionals.
- Expanding education on both climate and health within the state's public schools to incorporate age-appropriate coverage of the mental health and social impacts of climate change (including guidance to students on coping with increasingly common climate anxiety<sup>3</sup>).
- Developing plans for meeting the mental health and social welfare needs of individuals and families who are displaced within the state or migrate to the state due to climate change.

Various departments and agencies of the state government could participate in designing and implementing these activities, reflecting an interdisciplinary problem-solving approach to an interdisciplinary crisis. The Commission could offer guidance on initiating and assessing such efforts and coordinating them across government and private entities.

We therefore urge the Environmental Committee to expand its approach to the climate crisis, in order to effectively meet the needs of New Yorkers - both those who are currently suffering and those who unfortunately will as environmental disasters become more common.

Sincerely,

The NYS Chapter of the Outreach and Advocacy Committee  
Climate Psychology Alliance of North America & Climate Psychiatry Alliance

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