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Hon. Kevin Parker, Chair
New York State Senate Energy and
Telecommunications Committee
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Todd Kaminsky, Chair
New York State Senate
Environmental Conservation
Committee
LOB 307, Albany, NY 12247

**TESTIMONY FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR A GREATER NEW YORK
APPEARING BEFORE THE JOINT NEW YORK STATE SENATE
HEARINGS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION AND THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY ON
THE CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ACT.**

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Change

Thank you Chairman Kaminsky and Senator Parker for this opportunity to testify today in favor of the Climate and Community Investment Act (S.4264A). My name is Maritza Silva-Farrell, I am the Executive Director of ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York. ALIGN is a longstanding alliance of community, labor, and environmental justice organizations dedicated to creating good jobs, vibrant communities, and an accountable democracy for all New Yorkers.

In 2019, New York became a national climate leader by passing the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), which has already had a huge impact on making sure our state and even federal climate policy center the need to build good green jobs and the needs of environmental justice communities.

However, there is more work to be done. In the past year, we've seen the climate crisis continue unabated while dealing with a devastating global pandemic and recession, which has hit frontline Black and brown communities first and worst. Our state needs an economic and climate just transition to a renewable energy economy, and we need new revenue to put people back to work, build out renewable infrastructure, and invest in communities hit hardest by these interlocking crises. Economic recovery in the age of COVID-19 and climate change means that we cannot afford to address these crises in silos.

Furthermore, we cannot ignore the fact that corporate polluters have extracted obscene wealth from our communities while leaving many families to clean up the mess and suffer the devastating health consequences of their pollution. Through the years they've offloaded the real cost of their actions onto workers and communities, billions and billions of dollars per year in worker health and safety issues, poor health outcomes, early deaths, and climate disasters. It's time for them to pay up.

The Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA) is the solution to the multi-issue recovery we need in New York State. The CCIA would put a fee on pollution and raise \$15 billion per year. This money would be used to transition our economy to 100% renewable energy, invest in communities most impacted by pollution and climate change, and create over 150,000 good career jobs over the next 10 years. Communities most impacted by the climate crisis, and people who have been excluded from good paying jobs, would be first in line for good jobs to build renewable, resilient, thriving communities.

CCIA includes gold-standard labor provisions, including project labor agreements, prevailing wage, and apprenticeship and training requirements.

- The CCIA will ensure that workers employed on projects, or in buildings, that receive state assistance from the law, receive prevailing wages and benefits.
- The CCIA requires any state-supported projects that come from the law implement additional responsible contracting standards enforceable through a project labor agreement or community benefits agreement.
- If a project stemming from the CCIA hires workers in trades that have apprenticeship programs, the project must make use of their pre-apprenticeship programs to ensure workers are adequately trained, and to provide direct pathways to good, high-paying jobs.
- Local hiring standards would require employers to hire people from the community where they are working, helping to spur community and economic development.
- Employers are also encouraged to hire workers facing barriers to employment, including formerly incarcerated job-seekers, people with disabilities, workers coming off of unemployment, and women in non-traditional trades. The CCIA also encourages utilizing Minority and Women-Owned Businesses (MWBEs).

As we know, around 13,000 New Yorkers are affiliated with the fossil fuel industry, and we must make sure no workers or communities are left behind in the transition to a renewable energy economy. Seven percent of funds from the CCIA would go to a Worker and Community Assurance Fund which would provide guaranteed economic support to displaced workers, and support to re-train and re-equip workers to prevent layoffs. This includes income support, pension support, and funds for early retirement.

We know that carbon pricing and other “free market” mechanisms will not achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions we need to prevent the worst aspects of climate change. Moreover, the current system underpays workers and disadvantages low-income people and people of color, which is what the CCIA would reverse in a new green economy.

The transformative power of the CCIA comes not from charging polluters, but from investing billions of dollars into real and just climate solutions by centering labor and worker protections, community-led solutions, and strong equity and emissions reduction standards.

The legislature was a champion for the CLCPA — we need you again to stand up for climate, jobs, and justice.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this hearing and we are excited that the State continues to ensure that a just transition is a priority.