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Testimony to The Environmental Conservation Budget Hearing
Executive Budget Appropriations for 2022 - 2023

The Honorable Liz Krueger, Chair, Senate Finance Committee and
The Honorable Helene Weinstein, Chair, Assembly Ways and Means
Committee

Submitted by Alex Beauchamp, Northeast Region Director

I'm Alex Beauchamp, and I'm the Northeast Region Director at Food & Water Watch. We are a national environmental nonprofit organization with over 120,000 supporters throughout New York State. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony at this crucial legislative hearing.

New Yorkers know that the climate crisis is already here, with the deaths of so many in Queens during August's Hurricane Ida serving as yet another tragic reminder. We must lower emissions in every sector of our economy, and that includes moving our buildings off fracked gas. The first, simplest step New York can take to slash emissions from our buildings is to stop building new structures that burn fossil fuels.

Banning the use of fossil fuels to power new buildings will drastically lower greenhouse gas emissions, create good green jobs, and promote environmental justice. New York's buildings are the state's second-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions after transportation. If we're serious about achieving New York's aggressive climate goals, as mandated under the CLCPA, we must take immediate action to end our reliance on fracked



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gas to power and heat our homes and buildings. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), this is a key policy that must be adopted worldwide by 2025 in order to avoid climate catastrophe.

But emissions are only part of the story. A report from the [Rocky Mountain Institute](#) shows New York emits more air pollution from buildings than any state in the country, leading to an estimated 1,940 premature deaths annually. Taking strong action to clean up our buildings will not only lower our greenhouse gas emissions but also provide immediate health benefits and cost savings to the state.

Governor Kathy Hochul seems to recognize the importance of moving the Empire State's buildings off fossil fuels. Indeed, she included a gas ban in new buildings as part of her executive budget. Unfortunately, the implementation timeline is unacceptably long. Simply put, we don't have five years to wait for a gas ban. Instead of waiting until 2027, the legislature should take the common sense approach adopted by Senator Kavanagh and Assembly Member Gallagher in their All Electric Buildings Act (A.8431/S.6843A) This legislation will require new buildings to install heat pumps that run on electricity, in place of gas boilers and furnaces, to heat, cool, and provide hot water by the end of 2023. We have the technology to do this right now. In fact, many developers in all regions of the state are already building fossil-free buildings right now.

What's more, following New York City's ban on new buildings on a faster timeline than what's proposed in Governor Hochul's budget, it's clear not only that the state can move faster, but that some local governments already are. The legislature must ensure that any action at the state level doesn't weaken the monumental victory the climate movement won in the nation's largest city just over a month ago. At an absolute minimum, New York State should match the timeline that is now law in New York City. That said, we can and should go faster.



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New York's legislature passed landmark climate legislation years ago in the form of the CLCPA. Since then, we've seen little action to address the growing climate crisis. Make no mistake, the CLCPA must be the beginning rather than the end of our efforts to end the era of fossil fuels. The next step is clear, we need a ban on gas in new buildings, and we need it on a much faster timeline than what Governor Hochul proposes.

Thank you.