

Good morning, I would like to begin by thanking Senator Kevin Parker, the bill sponsor for the CCIA.

My name is Rahwa Ghirmatzion, director at PUSH Bflo. In keeping with regional protocol, I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and by honoring the sovereignty of the Six Nations—the Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca and Tuscarora—and their land where we are situated. In this acknowledgement, we hope to demonstrate respect for the treaties that were made on these territories and remorse for the harms and mistakes of the far and recent past. I also acknowledge that this countries' economy was built on the free labor by stolen, enslaved people from Africa. We, at PUSH Buffalo- are committed to black liberation and Indigenous Sovereignty.

A little bit about Buffalo NY, we are the 3rd poorest city, 6th most segregated in the nation, we have the 2nd oldest housing stock and suffer some of the worst health outcomes, 58th out of the 62 counties in NYS, due to our post-industrial past.

While the highly racialized inequities in our community are remarkable, as a frontline community on the West Side where we are practicing a “just transition” through our action place-based initiative called the Green Development Zone, on a 30square block area – is an example of the CLCPA and CCIA in action.

The mission of PUSH Buffalo is to mobilize residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing; to expand local hiring opportunities; and to advance racial, economic and environmental justice.

PUSH's Green Development Zone combines green affordable housing construction, community-based renewable energy projects, housing weatherization, green jobs training, green infrastructure, and vacant land restoration projects toward the goal of creating pathways to employment for neighborhood residents while, reducing our carbon footprint. By gaining control over public and private capital for “triple bottom line projects” that create economic growth, equity and environmental sustainability. This has been an incremental process over 15 years, built on the foundation of local knowledge, expertise, values and unwavering commitment to self-determination and community resilience in which our goal is to “show” and not “tell” what is possible when we say a “just transition”

We are learning with and from frontline communities such as UPROSE in Brooklyn, The Point in the South Bronx ... showing a community growth machine can help build the foundation for a new community economy.

We are grateful to our esteemed elected officials that are showing the courage to do the right thing to ensure justice and equity by responding to the urgency of this moment through BOLD actions that meet the scale of the climate crisis.

Together, we are the answers of our grandparents prayers and the foundation for the next 7 generations. We must make good on the promise of the CLCPA. NO more delay, Pass the CCIA!