



WEACT

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

2023 POLICY AGENDA
Campaigns and Initiatives

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Policy Agenda: Summary	4
Policy Agenda: In-Depth	10
Funding a Just and Equitable Future	10
Accountability and Public Participation	11
Civic Engagement and Voting Rights	13
Air Pollution and Cumulative Exposure	14
Energy	16
Extreme Heat	18
Healthy Housing	19
Workforce Development and Education	22
Waste and Sanitation	23
Parks and Green Space	24
Toxics	25
Transportation	28
Policies Index	29
Geographic Index	30

INTRODUCTION

Our mission is to build healthy communities by ensuring that people of color and low-income residents participate meaningfully in the creation of sound and equitable environmental health and protection policies and practices. WE ACT stands ready to work with administrators and legislators at every level of government to enact change in places where systemic racism and intentional disinvestment have stymied access to healthy environments for communities of low-income and of color. Our work is guided by the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing of 1996.

WE ACT releases an annual policy agenda that outlines our focus for the upcoming year. Our priorities include:

- Addressing the cumulative impacts of exposure to pollution, toxic chemicals and other environmental harms
- Making sure local, state and federal climate, energy and environmental funding and policy interventions are applied equitably and reach those most impacted by the climate crisis
- Ensuring government accountability and public participation in decision-making processes
- Encouraging civic engagement and securing robust voter rights and protections
- Relieving utility debt and solidifying green and healthy housing as a human right
- Facilitating a just and equitable transition toward an energy future that provides direct benefits to impacted people.



POLICY AGENDA



SUMMARY

POLICY INITIATIVE	LEVEL	POLICY TYPE	STATUS
-------------------	-------	-------------	--------

FUNDING A JUST AND EQUITABLE FUTURE

Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act	STATE	BALLOT MEASURE	APPROVED
Environmental Protection Fund	STATE	BUDGET & ADVOCACY	ONGOING
Equitable Implementation of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act	FEDERAL	BUDGET & ADVOCACY	ONGOING
Justice40 Initiative Implementation	FEDERAL	ADVOCACY	ONGOING

ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Environmental Justice Programs Funding (Local Law 60 & 64)	CITY	BUDGET & ADVOCACY	ONGOING
Community Benefits Agreements	CITY	ADVOCACY	PLANNING
Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) Implementation	STATE	ADVOCACY	ONGOING
Environmental Justice Law Implementation (S.2385/A.1564)	STATE	LEGISLATION	PAST DUE DATE
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) & Equitable Clean Energy Siting and Transmission	FEDERAL	LEGISLATION & ADVOCACY	ONGOING

POLICY INITIATIVE	LEVEL	POLICY TYPE	STATUS
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & VOTING RIGHTS			
Get Out The Vote	CITY	PROGRAM	ONGOING
Voting Rights for a Fair Democracy	STATE	LEGISLATION	TO BE REINTRODUCED
AIR POLLUTION AND CUMULATIVE EXPOSURE			
Cumulative Impacts Analysis Requirements (S.8830/A.2103D)	STATE	LEGISLATION	ON GOVERNOR'S DESK FOR SIGNATURE
Clearing the Toxic Air (S.4371D/A.6150B)	STATE	LEGISLATION	ON GOVERNOR'S DESK FOR SIGNATURE
Environmental Justice For All Act	FEDERAL	LEGISLATION	INTRODUCED IN 117TH CONGRESS, TO BE REINTRODUCED IN 118TH
Multi-Pollutant Standards	FEDERAL	REGULATION & ADVOCACY	ONGOING
ENERGY			
ENERGY JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY			

POLICY INITIATIVE	LEVEL	POLICY TYPE	STATUS
Renewable Rikers Act (Local Laws 16, 17 and 31 of 2021)	CITY	LEGISLATION	IMPLEMENTATION: RENEWABLE ENERGY AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT STUDIES TO BE PUBLISHED SPRING 2023
New York Build Public Renewables Act (S.6453C/A.1466D)	STATE	LEGISLATION & BUDGET	TO BE REINTRODUCED
Fighting Liquified Natural Gas Infrastructure	FEDERAL	REGULATION & ADVOCACY	ONGOING
ENERGY EFFICIENCY			
Energy Efficiency, Equity, and Jobs Act (S.3126C/A.3996C)	STATE	LEGISLATION & BUDGET	TO BE REINTRODUCED
Energy Affordability Program	STATE	BUDGET & ADVOCACY	IMPLEMENTATION
EXTREME HEAT			
Extreme Heat Coalition	STATE	COALITION & ADVOCACY	STARTING IN 2023
Expanding and Improving the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	STATE & FEDERAL	BUDGET & ADVOCACY	ONGOING
Heating and Cooling Relief Act (H.R. 6437)	FEDERAL	LEGISLATION	INTRODUCED
Expand and Permanently Fund the Be-A-Buddy Program	CITY	BUDGET	ONGOING

POLICY INITIATIVE	LEVEL	POLICY TYPE	STATUS
HEALTHY HOUSING			
HOUSING JUSTICE			
Good Cause Eviction (S.3082/A.5573)	STATE	LEGISLATION	ONGOING
PUBLIC HOUSING			
NYCHA: Healthy Homes Campaign	CITY	ADVOCACY	ONGOING
BUILDING ELECTRIFICATION & DECARBONIZATION			
Gas Free NYC	CITY	LEGISLATION	ENACTED
Local Law 97	CITY	LEGISLATION	RULEMAKING
Accelerated Phaseout of Fuel Oil No. 4 (Introduction 0470)	CITY	LEGISLATION	IN COMMITTEE
2 Million Climate-Friendly, Electrified or Electrification-Ready Homes in New York by 2030	STATE	EXECUTIVE PLAN & BUDGET	IMPLEMENTATION
All Electric New Buildings Act	STATE	LEGISLATION	TO BE REINTRODUCED
Out of Gas, In with Justice Pilot Project	STATE & FEDERAL	PILOT PROGRAM & REGULATORY	DATA COLLECTION COMPLETED & ONGOING

POLICY INITIATIVE	LEVEL	POLICY TYPE	STATUS
-------------------	-------	-------------	--------

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

DEVELOP THE GREEN WORKFORCE

Frontline Climate Corps	FEDERAL	PROGRAM & ADVOCACY	ONGOING
-------------------------	---------	--------------------	---------

CLIMATE EDUCATION

Climate Education in New York State (S.6837/A.9831 & S.6877/A.11143)	STATE	LEGISLATION	TO BE REINTRODUCED
--	-------	-------------	--------------------

WASTE & SANITATION

Zero Waste & Curbside Composting	CITY	LEGISLATION & ADVOCACY	IN COMMITTEE
----------------------------------	------	------------------------	--------------

PARKS AND GREEN SPACE

East Harlem Waterfront	CITY	CAPITAL PROJECT & ADVOCACY	FUNDED
------------------------	------	----------------------------	--------

Trees in Northern Manhattan	CITY	BUDGET & ADVOCACY	ONGOING
-----------------------------	------	-------------------	---------

TOXICS

TOXIC CHEMICALS IN CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Child Safe Products Act (S.501B/A.6286)	STATE	LEGISLATION	ENACTED
---	-------	-------------	---------

PFAS in Apparel Ban (S.6291A/A.7063A)	STATE	LEGISLATION	ON GOVERNOR'S DESK FOR SIGNATURE
---------------------------------------	-------	-------------	----------------------------------

POLICY INITIATIVE	LEVEL	POLICY TYPE	STATUS
BEAUTY INSIDE OUT			
Safe Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Act (S.3331B/A.143A)	STATE	LEGISLATION	TO BE REINTRODUCED
Mercury Out of Cosmetics (S.8291A/A.8630)	STATE	LEGISLATION	ON GOVERNOR'S DESK FOR SIGNATURE
Safer Beauty Bills Package	FEDERAL	LEGISLATION	INTRODUCED
PREVENTING CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING			
Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning in NYC	CITY	LEGISLATION & ADVOCACY	IN COMMITTEE
Lead Free Kids New York	STATE	LEGISLATION	TO BE REINTRODUCED
Lead Service Line Replacement Project	FEDERAL	ADVOCACY & PROGRAM	ONGOING
TRANSPORTATION			
East 125th Street Community Visioning Action Plan	CITY & STATE	ADVOCACY	ENACTED
Congestion Pricing	STATE	LEGISLATION	ON GOVERNOR'S DESK FOR SIGNATURE
Electric School Busses	CITY, STATE, & FEDERAL	BUDGET & ADVOCACY	FUNDED

FUNDING A JUST AND EQUITABLE FUTURE

Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act

LEVEL: State
POLICY TYPE: Ballot Measure
STATUS: Approved

CONTEXT: In the November 2022 midterm elections, voters overwhelmingly passed The New York State Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act, allocating \$4 billion in bonds for the State to improve infrastructure, air and water quality, and address the climate crisis.

ACTION: As a part of Clean Water and Jobs Coalition, WE ACT will now urge Governor Hochul to use this large pot of funding to address environmental justice issues in communities of low-income and communities of color. WE ACT will also ensure that the environmental justice allocations will be transparently tracked and distributed equitably across environmental justice communities in the State.

Equitable Implementation of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act

LEVEL: Federal
POLICY TYPE: Budget; Advocacy
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: As the climate crisis worsens, the need for significant funding to protect and build healthy communities heightens. Communities on the frontline of the climate crisis deserve equitable investments.

ACTION: WE ACT will work to ensure that funds from the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act reach communities that have been disproportionately burdened by the negative impacts of climate change and systemically left out of consideration for federal spending. We are committed to working with local and state officials to ensure that the bill's implementation delivers critical investments to communities of color and areas of low income and realizes the potential of the billions of dollars intended for environmental justice communities and the Administration's Justice40 initiative.

Environmental Protection Fund

LEVEL: State
POLICY TYPE: Budget
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: The New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is earmarked for capital projects that protect the environment and communities. Since its inception in 1993, the Fund has provided more than \$4 billion for a variety of environmental projects and has been a critical line of support for protecting clean air, water, parks, programs, and more.

ACTION: Last year, the EPF was funded at \$400 million. WE ACT, along with more than 100 other organizations in the Clean Water and Jobs Coalition, is urging Governor Kathy Hochul to fund the EPF at \$500 million in 2023 to further protect the environment and our health. In fact, given the toll the climate crisis has taken on our communities, we are asking that the EPF safeguard funds that have been earmarked for environmental justice and ensure a fair share of these funds reach New York City frontline communities.

Justice40 Initiative Implementation

LEVEL: Federal
POLICY TYPE: Advocacy
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: As the Federal government takes steps to address the climate crisis, it is vital to ensure that environmental justice communities receive the investments they deserve. Adapted from New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), the Justice40 Initiative was established by the Biden Administration to ensure that forty percent of overall benefits of hundreds of federal programs, including major funding streams, go to environmental justice communities across the United States.

ACTION: The Justice40 Initiative is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a just and equitable future for all Americans, especially those living in communities that are on the frontline and fenceline of the climate crisis and environmental injustices. The federal benefits and investments of Justice40 will come from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act and be distributed in two ways: discretionary grants and formula funds. WE ACT will ensure that local and state officials are securing funds for communities most in need.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Environmental Justice Programs Funding (Local Law 60 & 64)

LEVEL: City
POLICY TYPE: Budget; Advocacy
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: Local Laws 60 & 64 mandate that City agencies factor environmental justice into decision-making processes. However, due to a lack of financial support for the Environmental Justice Program, there have been many challenges in achieving Program goals. The Mayor's commitment to environmental justice must be supported, as obstructions and a lack of funding will further exacerbate environmental injustices.

ACTION: WE ACT asks that the New York City Council provide annual funding of \$1 million to the Environmental Justice Program, starting in fiscal year 2023. This will enable the Mayor's Office of Climate Policy and Programs to properly execute its plans to consult impacted communities and to do meaningful outreach, as outlined by Section 3-1006-f of Local Law 64 (2017).

Community Benefits Agreements

LEVEL: City
POLICY TYPE: Advocacy
STATUS: Planning

CONTEXT: A Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) is a contractual agreement between a community-based organization or entity and a developer that is trying to get a project approved in the neighborhood. The CBA outlines the types of benefits a community will receive by accepting the developer's project. Examples include a promise to protect affordable housing, employ workers from the neighborhood, or create a resource like a recreation center. While CBA's seem nice on the outside, often they are not upheld and the community does not received what is promised to them.

SOLUTION: WE ACT is researching the feasibility of increasing guardrails on CBAs to ensure developers actually deliver on their promise to communities.

Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) Implementation

LEVEL: State
POLICY TYPE: Advocacy
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: In 2019, New York State passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), an ambitious climate action law that calls for an 85 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. To ensure effective implementation in these early stages, it is important that the State focuses on disadvantaged communities defined by the State's draft criteria.

ACTION: As a member of the New York State Climate Justice Working Group, WE ACT will serve as a permanent advisor to the Climate Action Council; our counsel will keep false energy solutions out of the state's implementation of the CLCPA to ensure a just transition to a renewable energy future. We will also address how to incorporate the needs of environmental justice communities and map disadvantaged communities to ensure that they receive a minimum of 35-40 percent of the benefits from emission reduction programs.



Environmental Justice Law Implementation (S.2385/A.1564)

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: Past Due Date

CONTEXT: At the end of 2019, former New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the important Environmental Justice Law, which is part of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. This law will create a permanent Environmental Justice Advisory Group in the Department of Environmental Conservation, giving environmental justice communities a seat at the proverbial table. This body is critical to ensuring that CCLPA is fully and authentically realized, yet the deadline has passed for instating the Environmental Justice Advisory Group.

ACTION: Governor Hochul and the legislature are now two years past the deadline of January 1st, 2022, to establish the Advisory Group. WE ACT will pursue the necessary establishment of the Advisory Group and will advise in its direction.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) & Equitable Clean Energy Siting and Transmission

LEVEL: Federal

POLICY TYPE: Legislation, Advocacy

STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: The goals of the National Environmental Policy Act align with those of environmental justice. It is an essential tool in the fight against environmental racism, but it remains under attack - mostly recently in the name of quickly deploying “clean” energy projects in the wake of passage of the Inflation Reduction Act.

ACTION: WE ACT is a leading voice in calling for a restored and strengthened NEPA and led the advocacy to secure nearly \$1 billion in implementation funds for nearly 10 agencies via the IRA. WE ACT will continue our NEPA advocacy and work to bolster legislation such as the Environmental Justice for All Act, which is essential legislation to ensure that communities are centered, protected, and supported in the consideration of major federal projects.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND VOTING RIGHTS

Get Out the Vote

LEVEL: City
POLICY TYPE: Program
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: Too often, people who are eligible to vote do not participate in this important democratic process. Voting rules imposed across the country have made it disproportionately more difficult for people of color to cast ballots compared to white voters, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

ACTION: During Citywide and Statewide elections, WE ACT leads significant voter registration efforts in Northern Manhattan to encourage our communities to use their voices in our political system.

Voting Rights for a Fair Democracy

LEVEL: Federal
POLICY TYPE: Legislation
STATUS: To be Reintroduced

CONTEXT: The barriers to achieving a just and equitable society have their roots in democratic erosion rising in the U.S. We have seen the rising challenge to democracy from the January 6 Insurrection, sustained discrediting of traditional media sources, a rebalancing of the Supreme Court toward conservative extremism, passage of more than 400 voter suppression laws since the 2020 election, and an intentional weakening of bedrock human and civil rights policies and practices.

ACTION: WE ACT will pursue legislation that expands voting provisions and reverses or stops voter disenfranchisement efforts that disempower the environmental justice constituency.



AIR POLLUTION & CUMULATIVE EXPOSURE

Cumulative Impacts Analysis Requirements (S.8830/A.2103D)

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: On Governor's Desk for Signature

CONTEXT: The exposure to many environmental hazards at once is what hurts health; WE ACT refers to this compounded harm as "cumulative impacts," and it is a cornerstone issue in the environmental justice movement. Communities of color and low-income communities often are exposed to multiple environmental hazards because multiple polluting facilities have been sited in their neighborhoods, affecting multiple generations.

ACTION: With allies, WE ACT successfully passed a New York State bill in the legislature to combat this issue by requiring the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to deny new permit requests of polluting facilities if an existing burden report demonstrates the facility would be contributing to a disproportionate environmental burden on a disadvantaged community. This legislation will also deny the renewal of existing facilities' permits if they fail to reduce their emissions in the community in which they are sited. Now that the bill has passed the legislature, WE ACT and our allies are urging Governor Hochul to sign the bill into law by December 31st, 2022.

Clearing the Toxic Air (S.4371D/A.6150B)

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: On Governor's Desk for Signature

CONTEXT: In the United States, low-income communities and communities of color are most likely to inhale harmful air pollutants. Black and Brown communities inhale an average of 56% and 63% more air pollution than is caused by their consumption of goods and services. Inhalation of harmful air pollutants increases the risk of heart disease, lung cancer, and respiratory infection while concurrently reducing life expectancy.

This inequity is illustrated by the dense concentration of industrial facilities located in areas like Upper Manhattan and the Bronx, areas which also have some of the highest concentration of asthma-related ER visits. This inequitable pollution pattern is replicated in communities of color across New York State, including Buffalo, Albany, Rochester, and Syracuse.

ACTION: As co-chair of the Just Green Partnership, a coalition of 60-plus organizations across New York State working to pass environmental health policies, WE ACT successfully passed the statewide bill to reduce emissions of toxic air contaminants in New York State and lessen their impact in low-income and communities of color. This legislation preserves and protects the quality of air in New York State by limiting the emissions of cancer-causing air pollutants including benzene, formaldehyde, vinyl chloride, polychlorinated dibenzodioxins, polychlorinated dibenzofurans, trichloroethylene and mercury through standards set by the Department of Environmental Conservation. With Just Green Partnership, WE ACT is now advocating for Governor Hochul to sign the legislation into law by December 31st, 2022.



Multi-Pollutant Standards

Level: Federal

POLICY TYPE: Regulation, Advocacy

STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: The power and transportation sectors are major sources of air pollution in the country. Many of these regulations do not reflect the latest science or have been updated in several years. Power plants and vehicles continue to spew out climate change causing greenhouse gas emissions and toxic air pollutants that disproportionately and adversely affect the health of low-income communities, Indigenous populations, and people of color. Starting 2021, The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began the process of updating and developing rules to reduce criteria and toxic air pollutants such as fine particulates, nitrogen oxides and benzene as well as climate pollutants like carbon and methane from the power plants, cars, and trucks.

ACTION: Last year, WE ACT launched a focused cohort of Environmental Justice organizations, called Clean Air for the Long Haul, to provide funding and technical assistance for overburdened communities to participate in the rulemaking process in the power and transportation sectors. This cohort will convene on a regular basis, pursue campaigns, and actively engage in upcoming rulemaking with the aim of centering the voices in these communities and ensuring the EPA develops strong, health protective standards. In addition, through the Climate Action Campaign's Solutions for Pollution Campaign, WE ACT is part of a diverse coalition of stakeholders urging the Biden Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to finalize and promulgate a broader suite of aggressive and enforceable standards that target reductions in greenhouse gas and set air pollutant criteria by the end of 2024.



Environmental Justice For All Act

LEVEL: Federal

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: Introduced in 117th Congress, To be Reintroduced in 118th

CONTEXT: All people have the right to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment. But for too many, these rights are still unrealized. Systemic barriers, including redlining, intentional disinvestment, and unregulated pollution, have had devastating impacts on communities of color and low-income. These injustices, paired with the cumulative, magnifying impacts of housing, economic, education, health care injustices mean that millions in America have been ignored by our government for generations. That is why we need comprehensive environmental justice legislation.

ACTION: WE ACT will continue its integral role in the development of key legislation intended to address long-standing environmental justice issues. We will work with the key offices in both the House and Senate to reintroduce an essential bill in the 118th Congress and elicit support from Members who currently are not sponsors.



ENERGY JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY

Renewable Rikers Act (Local Laws 16, 17 and 31 of 2021)

LEVEL: City

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: Implementation; Renewable energy and wastewater treatment studies to be published Spring 2023

CONTEXT: New Yorkers know that the time to switch to renewable energy is now, especially considering threats like Superstorm Sandy that knocked out centralized energy-generation plants. Yet, one of the primary limitations on increasing local solar power production is the limited amount of space with appropriate conditions. In 2021, WE ACT was part of the Renewable Rikers Coalition that passed a set of laws to transform the soon-to-be-closing Rikers Penal Colony 413-acre island into a place of regeneration; The Act paves the way for installing a wastewater treatment facility and a solar farm on the Island, potentially generating as much as 14 megawatts of renewable energy:

ACTION: As a member of the Renewable Rikers Coalition, WE ACT helped get the Act passed into law. Now, we are monitoring the Act's implementation, which enjoins that as the prison closes, the Department of Correction must relinquish Rikers island jurisdiction to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services and requires the city to study how renewable energy and wastewater treatment facilities can be placed on the island. Furthermore, WE ACT has trained more than 100 residents of Northern Manhattan in solar panel installation, and we want to train people who were formerly incarcerated to perform solar installation.

New York Build Public Renewables Act (S6453C/A1466D)

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Legislation, Advocacy

STATUS: To be Reintroduced

CONTEXT: The New York Power Authority (NYPA), the largest public power utility in the country, is a great resource for renewable energy solutions; right now, it is the lowest-cost electricity supplier in the state, and hydropower (a renewable resource) represents 70 percent of all its production. But there are major restrictions on what NYPA can do — for instance, NYPA legally is not allowed to own or build new utility-scale renewable energy projects, nor is it allowed to directly sell energy to individual households. This is a huge barrier to increasing renewable energy while keeping down home energy costs.

ACTION: WE ACT believes that energy is for the people, and as such, energy systems should be controlled by publicly owned and democratically accountable entities. Through participation in two major state-wide coalitions (the New York Energy Democracy Alliance and Public Power New York), WE ACT is advocating for the passage of the New York Build Public Renewables Act, a legislation that would allow NYPA to own and build new renewable energy projects, including the generation, storage, and transmission of renewables. This is one of the most important first steps in achieving public power statewide and making sure that energy systems are clean, affordable, healthy, and resilient.



Fighting Liquified Natural Gas Infrastructure

LEVEL: Federal

POLICY TYPE: Regulatory, Advocacy

STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: In less than a decade since the US Congress lifted restrictions on the export of liquified natural gas (LNG), we have become one of the world's largest exporters. There are more than 20 new and expanded proposed LNG terminals, many of them planned in communities in the Gulf Region of Louisiana and Texas already overburdened by the petrochemical industries. LNG terminals and operations expose frontline communities of color to toxic air pollution like nitrogen oxides and benzene causing a range of adverse health impacts, including lung and heart disease, cancer and preterm death. As exports are tied to foreign markets, the exponential increase in US LNG exports has raised energy prices at home, creating economic instability, especially for many low-wealth, energy-burdened people across the country.

ACTION: In 2022, WE ACT began a campaign to activate the environmental justice movement calling for the Administration, specifically the Departments of Energy and Transportation, the Federal Regulatory Commission, and the EPA to use their scope of authority to halt the new and expanded LNG operations and infrastructure to tackle climate change, safeguard environmental justice communities, and to stabilize domestic energy prices. WE ACT will continue this advocacy campaign, which includes agency engagement, Congressional outreach, digital ads, and earned media to ensure that climate, economic, and environmental justice are considered in environmental reviews, permitting decisions, and public determinations as it relates to LNG.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Energy Efficiency, Equity, and Jobs Act (S.3126C/A.3996C)

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Legislation, Budget

STATUS: To be Reintroduced

CONTEXT: Fossil fuel dependent energy use in the home is a key contributor to climate change and health issues due to the exposure of toxic fumes that cause respiratory and cardiovascular illness. Energy efficiency is a key element in mitigating climate change and improving environmental health and economic well-being.

However, the state's energy efficiency programming inadequately serves people of color and low-income individuals because lead, asbestos, and mold remediation are not funded by the state as part of a pre-weatherization requirement. As a result, disadvantaged communities living in older housing with these environmental hazards often present do not qualify for energy efficiency retrofits. In addition, energy efficiency jobs represent a fast-growing industry statewide, but job training isn't readily available in environmental justice communities.

ACTION: WE ACT is a steering committee member of the Energy Democracy Alliance, a statewide coalition of grassroots groups and policy experts, working together to pass the Energy Efficiency, Equity, and Jobs Act and get the bill in the state budget. This bill will require that energy-efficiency retrofit monies be deployed to low-income communities and communities of color by ensuring lead, mold, and asbestos is removed from homes first so that they qualify for and receive the full health benefits from an energy efficiency upgrade. It will also require the state and utilities to allocate worker training funds to disadvantaged communities, and the State energy agency must track actual benefits of energy efficiency retrofit work.

Energy Affordability Program

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Budget, Advocacy

STATUS: Implementation

CONTEXT: Low-income utility customers across New York State have over \$1.7 billion dollars in utility debt. With high utility bills, people often forego their medications or healthy foods to pay their bills.

These types of coping activities lead to hospitalizations, food insecurity, and developmental concerns in children. New York State allocated \$250 million in the 2022-23 budget to provide utility debt relief across low-income communities. However, the program funding is not adequate to address the enormous amount of debt people are facing and the program has a difficult application.

ACTION: With allies across the state, WE ACT is advocating for the state to increase funding for this program and providing feedback on how it can be improved to allow for ease of enrollment. WE ACT is hosting workshops with the Northern Manhattan community to inform and assist folks on ways to receive utility debt relief.

EXTREME HEAT

Extreme Heat Coalition

LEVEL: State
POLICY TYPE: Coalition; Advocacy
STATUS: Starting in 2023

CONTEXT: Extreme heat is deadly, and despite it being the number one weather related killer in New York State (and disproportionately deadly for communities of color), there is little coordination between the government and community groups to implement solutions that will mitigate the negative health impacts. As extreme heat events increase in severity and frequency because of climate change, urban areas are at greater risk for deadly outcomes due to the high density of heat absorbing surfaces and limited green space, which contribute to the urban heat island effect.

ACTION: WE ACT plans to convene the first of its kind, extreme heat coalition, in 2023. It will include community based environmental justice organizations and allies in urban areas from across the state. The coalition will work together to implement equitable heat mitigation solutions in cities across the State, including proposals in WE ACT's 2022 Extreme Heat Policy Agenda.

Expanding and Improving the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LEVEL: State & Federal
POLICY TYPE: Budget; Advocacy
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: Heat is the deadliest form of weather. Given its urban heat island design and attributes, New York City is particularly susceptible to the effects of rising temperatures. On average, extreme heat exposure in New York City has resulted in more than 100 heat-related deaths, and approximately 450 hospitalizations or ER visits, per year.

ACTION: Cool homes are the best defense against heat-related illness and death, yet low-income households and households of color struggle to access and afford the energy required to outfit their homes for extreme temperatures. As part of our Heat, Health, and Equity Initiative, WE ACT is working with allies and New York State to improve the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), advocating for increased funding to subsidize expensive summer utility bills for qualified households.

Heating and Cooling Relief Act (H.R. 6437)

LEVEL: Federal
POLICY TYPE: Legislation
STATUS: Introduced

CONTEXT: National research on household energy burdens reports that low-income households spend three times more of their income on energy costs. In New York alone, utility debt was more than \$2.1 billion dollars in March 2020. With mounting energy costs, many low-income and/or communities of color are forced to decide between paying the utility bill or purchasing food or other important medications. The Heating and Cooling Relief Act takes steps to reduce the energy burdens of LIHEAP recipients by investing more in weatherization and increasing funding to the program.

ACTION: This bill plans to address the energy burden by increasing the authorized annual spending for LIHEAP from \$3.8 million to \$40 billion. Additionally, the bill would provide emergency funds to families who are paying higher energy bills due to increased air-conditioning usage during extreme heat seasons. WE ACT plans to continue working with the U.S. Representative Jamaal Bowman to engage more support and awareness for his comprehensive bill.

Expand and Permanently Fund the Be-A-Buddy Program

LEVEL: City
POLICY TYPE: Budget
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: Research shows that the best way to keep vulnerable populations - the elderly, people with medical conditions or limited mobility, people who live alone - safe during an emergency is through building strong community connections. The Be-A-Buddy Program is a formalized method to connect at-risk people with neighbors in the community who can check on one another during severe weather-related emergencies like extreme heat and flooding. New York City launched a highly successful "Be-A-Buddy" pilot program in the South Bronx in 2017, with the intention to expand the pilot to Northern Manhattan. Unfortunately, our community has yet to see the funding materialize to recreate the program for our neighbors.

ACTION: WE ACT plans to advocate for funding in New York City's FY2024 budget to expand the Be-A-Buddy program to Northern Manhattan and other environmental justice communities across the city.

HEALTHY HOUSING

HOUSING JUSTICE

Good Cause Eviction (S.3082/A.5573)

LEVEL: State
POLICY TYPE: Legislation
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: New York City is dealing with a historic housing crisis, and nowhere is that felt more than in Northern Manhattan, where speculation is forcing rents to skyrocket, and displacement of longtime community members feels imminent. As WE ACT continues to advocate for healthy housing policies that will remediate toxins, weatherize homes and provide deep energy retrofits to unregulated apartments, we want to ensure that tenants, particularly low-income tenants, are able to remain in their homes after receiving these necessary energy upgrades and are not priced out by landlords looking to increase rents due to new investments in their units.

ACTION: WE ACT supports the work of the statewide Housing Justice For All Coalition and their efforts to pass good cause eviction, a bill that gives every tenant in New York State the right to a renewal lease and protections against unreasonable rent increases. This legislation will give unregulated tenants across the state much needed stability and prevent unjust real estate speculation in low-income neighborhoods.

PUBLIC HOUSING

NYCHA: Healthy Homes Campaign

Level: City
POLICY TYPE: Advocacy
STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: Historically, the health and safety of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents have been negatively impacted by poor building infrastructure and other issues related to operations and accountability, most of which are tied to the fact that it has been chronically underfunded for years. As a result, the New Yorkers who rent apartments in NYCHA developments often have to endure environmental challenges such as mold, lead, and pests along with substandard service in terms of repairs and other basic issues.

ACTION: In 2023, the WE ACT NYCHA Working Group will engage with residents across Northern Manhattan on issues related to environmental health and environmental justice; specifically, the NYCHA Working Group will investigate resident safety and security, and NYCHA operations, e.g. lead, mold, sustainability, infrastructure, and other important topics. The NYCHA Working Group is also organizing to insist that NYCHA properly engages residents and does meaningful outreach to residents about the RAD/PACT Program and Public Housing Preservation Trust.

BUILDING ELECTRIFICATION & DECARBONIZATION

Gas Free NYC

LEVEL: City
POLICY TYPE: Legislation
STATUS: Enacted

CONTEXT: Fossil fuel combustion in buildings produces air pollution that accelerates climate change, contributes to increasingly extreme weather events, and kills nearly 1,000 New Yorkers every year. Furthermore, every new building that installs a gas (or oil) boiler or furnace locks in decades of new fossil fuel air pollution.

ACTION: WE ACT co-led the #GasFreeNYC coalition that successfully passed a bill into law that would end gas use in newly constructed buildings and push for energy efficiency standards that utilize renewable energy (instead of polluting gas boilers) and rely on clean, new technologies, such as heat pumps. The law will take effect in 2023 for all new buildings under seven stories and 2027 for new buildings over seven stories.



Local Law 97

LEVEL: City

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: Rulemaking

CONTEXT: In New York City, buildings account for about 70 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, making that infrastructure the most significant contributor to the climate crises locally. To address this issue, in 2019, the New York City Council passed a landmark law mandating that buildings larger than 25,000 square feet have to cut their emissions 40 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050. While this is a significant step in the right direction, equitable implementation of this law won't happen naturally: Watchdogs and community representatives must be at the decision-making table.

ACTION: WE ACT has a seat at the table on the Climate Mobilization Advisory Board. The Advisory Board completed recommendations to the City Council regarding Local Law 97 implementation (in consultation with dozens of industry experts). We are able to ensure that equity is a constant and significant part of the conversations and amplify the wants and needs of our community. WE ACT is working with other advocates to pressure the Adams Administration to equitably implement Local Law 97 without weakening the law during the rulemaking process.

Accelerated Phaseout of Fuel Oil No. 4 (Introduction 0470)

LEVEL: City

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: In Committee

CONTEXT: Residual fuel oil #4 is a heavy fossil-fuel used to power boilers in old buildings throughout the city. The prolonged use of this fuel oil has substantial environmental health impacts that primarily afflict low income Black and Latino New Yorkers. Byproducts from burning this fuel type are like that of diesel fuel, which is associated with aggravating asthma, heart and lung disease, cancer and premature mortality. Due to the disproportionate placement of bus depots, plants, sanitation sites, train and truck yards, thruways creating traffic, and more, rates of childhood asthma in Harlem and the Bronx are higher than the average rate of New York City. With the combination of these factors, the consequences to respiratory health for frontline communities are especially severe.

ACTION: Introduction 0470 would ban this type of fuel oil, prompting a swift transition to less harmful heating sources. It mandates an end to fuel oil usage in certain building types by 2023, ultimately terminating its usage in all buildings by 2025.

Schools are already slated to remove fuel oil #4 from their heating systems by 2026. Without the passage of Introduction 0470, students would be forced to come home to buildings burning fuel oil #4 until 2030. Signing this bill into law is essential to is a vital step in improving air quality for all and aligning policy priorities for holistic environmental action.

2 Million Climate-Friendly, Electrified or Electrification-Ready Homes in NYS by 2030

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Executive Plan; Budget

STATUS: Implementation

CONTEXT: Thanks to advocacy from WE ACT and allied organizations, in 2022 Governor Hochul made a promise that New York State would make 2 million of its homes electric or ready to be electrified; 800,000 of these homes are promised to be affordable housing. While this is an exciting promise, it is vital that Governor Hochul fund her declaration and implement programs that will reach households on the frontline of the climate crisis.

ACTION: With allies in Better Building NY and Renewable Heat Now Coalitions, WE ACT is advocating for Governor Hochul to create a Green Affordable Pre-Electrification (GAP) Fund that will direct funding to help households address deferred maintenance issues and eliminate legacy environmental hazards like lead, mold, old roofs, and poor ventilation.





Out of Gas, In with Justice Pilot Project

LEVEL: State; Federal

POLICY TYPE: Pilot Program; Advocacy

STATUS: Data Collection Completed; Ongoing

CONTEXT: New York has a legislative mandate to decarbonize its economy by 2050, but it has yet to commit to building sector policies that focus on affordable housing. In addition, state utilities continue to expand natural gas and increase sales, which make it increasingly difficult to achieve the decarbonization goal. And there is increasing evidence that the harmful indoor air pollution from cooking with gas stoves can exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma.

ACTIONS: WE ACT launched the Out of Gas, In with Justice pilot project in 2021 to study health benefits of replacing gas stoves with electric, induction stoves in 20 NYCHA apartments in the Bronx. The final report to be released in 2023, breaks down the health benefits of electrification in affordable housing, the social acceptance of electric appliances and the infrastructure needs of existing buildings for policy makers and advocates looking to advance equitable building decarbonization policies. Partners at PUSH Buffalo are leading the second arm of the study in 20 homes in Buffalo and plan to replace gas stoves and boilers with induction stoves and heat pumps. Data collection is set to begin in 2023. To promote the data findings and further engage nationwide, WE ACT will be advancing policies pertaining to gas stove regulation and labeling on the state and federal levels.

All-Electric New Buildings Act (S6843C/A8431)

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: To Be Reintroduced

CONTEXT: Electrifying existing buildings is significantly more costly than electrifying new buildings. All Electric new construction is the smartest way forward to avoid costly electrical upgrades down the line as our state continues to reduce its carbon footprint. Electrification of new construction is the most practical first step in wide scale building electrification.

ACTION: Following on the heels of New York City's passage of #GasFreeNYC, a law that requires all new construction for small buildings to be all electric in 2023 and large buildings in 2027 for New York City, New York State should swiftly pass mirroring legislation and enact all electric new construction requirements statewide.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

DEVELOP THE GREEN WORKFORCE

Frontline Climate Corps

LEVEL: Federal

POLICY TYPE: Program; Advocacy

STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: Clean energy jobs are a growing sector of employment with plenty of opportunities. However, the clean energy workforce is largely underrepresented. Black workers compose only 8 percent of clean energy employees. So, as awareness of a Just Transition begins to become more prevalent in the workforce, it is important that Black workers and women are not left behind and are able to be skilled and ready to receive equal opportunity.

ACTION: WE ACT is revisiting its work to implement a Frontline Climate Corps in federal appropriations for education, workforce development and career initiatives. The Frontline Climate Corps would center Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions, along with K-12 schools, to teach climate education and act as a direct pipeline to any high school, undergraduate, and graduate students who are poised to become our next climate activists.



CLIMATE EDUCATION

Climate Education in New York State (S.6837/A.9831 & S.6877/A.11143)

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: To Be Reintroduced

CONTEXT: While many New York State K-12 education standards topically relate to climate change, there is no requirement for educators to teach about climate change in schools. Without education that focuses on issues related to the environment and climate injustices, future generations will be even more unprepared for a shifting climate.

ACTION: The Climate Resiliency and Education Task Force (CRETf) co-led by National Wildlife Federation will work with other stakeholders in education to pursue legislation that supports climate education initiatives that are centered in justice. A platform for this initiative will be released in January 2023.

WE ACT independently supports the following bills: S.6837/A.9931 will guide development of climate change education in schools by creating a grant program, from amounts annually appropriated, for school districts, boards of cooperative educational services, and community-based organizations to conduct education programs aimed at increasing climate change literacy in students. S.6877/A.11143 will require the adoption of climate science in high schools, at the request of the Commissioner of Education.



WASTE AND SANITATION

Zero Waste & Curbside Composting

LEVEL: City

POLICY TYPE: Legislation; Advocacy

STATUS: In Committee

CONTEXT: New York City recycles only 20 percent of its waste despite 68 percent of waste in landfills is considered recyclable. Food found in municipal solid waste landfills (more than 35 million tons nationally) is a major contributor of methane as it decomposes. New York City throws out 4,000 tons of food waste per day. Throwing out excessive amounts of food waste like this poses several health challenges. Food waste attracts pests like rats, cockroaches, and pigeons, which plague neighborhoods that lack secure disposal options and carry diseases like Leptospirosis, which is easily transmittable to household pets and people and exacerbate existing respiratory illnesses like asthma.

ACTION: WE ACT endorses the New York City Council's Zero Waste Bill Package and calls for its immediate passage. This bill package will expand access to composting and recycling options for all households in Northern Manhattan and will set the city on course to achieve zero waste by 2030. Members of the Climate Justice Working Group plan to develop an education outreach plan for Northern Manhattan to teach residents about the benefits and how-to's of composting in their homes. This policy will improve basic sanitation for Northern Manhattan neighborhoods and reduce the number of rats and mice seen on our streets.



PARKS AND GREEN SPACE

East Harlem Waterfront

LEVEL: City

POLICY TYPE: Capital Project; Advocacy

STATUS: Funded

CONTEXT: It is well documented and known to many city agencies that East Harlem is vulnerable to flooding from extreme rain, sea level rise, and storm surge — according to Federal Emergency Management Agency flood maps, the neighborhood sits directly in a high-risk zone. Residents have been consistently vocal about flooded streets, and for more than a decade, East Harlem communities have been promised plans and funds to make neighborhoods more resistant to flooding. Most of the residents in the most at-risk areas are Black/African American and Latinx and are among the most economically disadvantaged individuals in New York City.

ACTION: WE ACT will continue to advocate for East Harlem and ensure the New York City Economic Development Corporation completes their East Harlem Manhattan Greenway Project, totaling \$294 million in repairs to the 107th Street Pier and East River Esplanade. WE ACT will also ensure that the Adams Administration's new Climate Strong Communities program is equitably implemented and succeeds. The program allocates \$8.5 billion in pre-disaster mitigation grant funding to enable New York City to complete critical resiliency projects like the East Harlem Coastal Resiliency plan. WE ACT is also an active steering committee member of the Rise to Resilience coalition, a group of advocates who collectively call on our federal, state, and local governments to urgently prioritize climate resilience and hazard mitigation.

Trees in Northern Manhattan

LEVEL: City

POLICY TYPE: Budget; Advocacy

STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: Northern Manhattan faces a distinct combination of factors that put residents at risk for respiratory and heat-related illnesses. A long legacy of polluting industrial facilities, poorly maintained buildings, minimal economic development, and sparse green space have resulted in neighborhoods and residents that are unequipped to easily withstand extreme heat. Harlem has the second highest childhood asthma rate in the city behind the Bronx and has a higher poverty rate than the city in general. These conditions create oppressive health and financial strain upon residents who are already managing many hardships in their lives.

ACTION: Equitable tree distribution cleans the air and lowers surface temperatures. Shade offers free, publicly accessible cooling for pedestrians, park goers, and buildings. Trees help filter particulate matter pollution from traffic exhaust and industrial fossil-fuel burning activities. That is why WE ACT will continue to advocate for a budget that provides sufficient funding to plant and maintain street trees while also expanding tree stewardship programs for the propagation and care of trees on private property. It is also a top priority to ensure that the Mayor's Office seizes the opportunity to streamline funding from the Inflation Reduction Act for tree planting, coastal restoration, and environmental/climate justice block grants in consultation with high heat vulnerable neighborhoods like those in Northern Manhattan.



TOXIC CHEMICALS IN CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Child Safe Products Act (S501B/A6296)

Level: State
POLICY TYPE: Legislation
STATUS: Enacted

CONTEXT: Adults want children to have toys that are both fun and safe. The UN Environment Programme reported that 25 percent of children's toys contain harmful chemicals (used to provide elasticity and levels of hardness), and there are other risks related to choking or toxic contaminants. Unfortunately, there are few comprehensive resources that aid in determining toy safety.

ACTION: The Child Safe Products Act requires the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to publish lists of dangerous chemicals of concern in children's products and toys and bans the sale of children's products containing these toxic chemicals. The ban on the distribution or sale of these products goes into effect January 1st, 2023. A co-chair of the Just Green Partnership, WE ACT is watching to ensure the ban goes into effect on time and that the DEC will post the full list of chemicals on its website, so for the first time, parents, families, and caregivers will have access to this information.

PFAS in Apparel Ban (S6291A/A7063A)

LEVEL: State
POLICY TYPE: Legislation
STATUS: On Governor's Desk for Signature

CONTEXT: Research has linked a ubiquitous class of toxic chemicals known as PFAS (such as PFOA and PFOS) to kidney and testicular cancer. Communities with PFAS contaminated water have been shown to suffer serious medical effects. The state must stop the use of PFAS in garments and textiles. Its usage in our clothing poisons our communities' air and waterways with forever chemicals.

ACTION: With the Just Green Partnership, WE ACT helped to successfully pass this legislation in the NYS legislature. Now, we are working with allies to urge the governor to sign a bill into law to prohibit the use of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in apparel.

BEAUTY INSIDE OUT

Safe Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Act (S3331B/A143A)

LEVEL: State
POLICY TYPE: Legislation
STATUS: To be Reintroduced

CONTEXT: There are many toxic chemicals in personal care products (ex. soaps and cosmetics), and many of these chemical exposures have been linked to cancer, infertility, miscarriage, poor infant and maternal health outcomes, obesity, asthma, and many other serious health concerns. Due to heavy targeted marketing and the societal elevation of white beauty standards, young women and femme-identifying people of color have high rates of use of such harmful products.

ACTION: As co-chair of the Just Green Partnership, a coalition of 60-plus organizations across New York State working to pass environmental health policies, WE ACT is advocating for the passage of a statewide bill to remove toxic chemicals from some personal care products, and require ingredient disclosures for others, and is up against a powerful chemical and beauty industry that wants to stop the bill from advancing and keep poisoning young women femme-identifying people of color.



Mercury Out of Cosmetics (S.8291A/A8630)

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: On Governor's Desk for Signature

CONTEXT: Mercury is used as a preservative in creams designed to lighten skin color. A dangerous, persistent neurotoxin, mercury can cause symptoms such as skin irritation and dizziness, as well as cognitive and psychological damage and impairment; additionally, there is great variation in how mercury is named and noted on product labels. The Minamata Convention on Mercury establishes a 1mg/kg, (1ppm) for skin lightening products, and while many states and brands have already begun prohibiting the sale of cosmetics that contain mercury, it remains a growing, billion-dollar international industry, targeted almost wholly at people of color.

ACTION: Working with the sponsors Assemblywoman Reyes and Senator Brouk, WE ACT successfully passed a bill in the legislature that would ban mercury from all cosmetics sold in the state. Now, we are urging the governor to sign the bill into law. The Mercury Out of Cosmetics bill would ban the distribution and sale of any mercury-containing cosmetics, toiletries, and fragrances in stores and on the Internet. The bill also would mandate that manufacturers clearly and conspicuously disclose the levels of mercury in their products.

Safer Beauty Bills Package

LEVEL: Federal

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: Introduced

CONTEXT: The average American uses roughly 12 personal care products a day, resulting in exposure to an average of 168 unique chemicals. Many of these chemical exposures have been linked to cancer, infertility, miscarriage, poor infant and maternal health outcomes, obesity, asthma, and many other serious health concerns. The number of products used daily is even higher for women of color, who are also disproportionately exposed to more harmful chemicals through personal care products.

ACTION: WE ACT will work in coalition with the Breast Cancer Prevention Partners to engage key caucuses and add sponsors to the bill.

The Safer Beauty Bill Package contains four new bills that will be introduced in Congress:

- Toxic-Free Beauty Act- HR 5537
 - Prohibits the use of 11 hazardous chemicals from beauty and personal care products sold in the U.S. The bill would also ban the use of the entire class of PFAS.
- Cosmetic Supply Chain Transparency Act-5539
 - Requires suppliers to provide owners with the ingredient disclosure, toxicity and safety data and the certificate of analyses they need to make safer beauty and personal care products.
- Cosmetic Fragrance and Flavor Ingredient Right to Know Act- HR 5538
 - Requires companies selling beauty or personal care products to publicly disclose the presence of fragrance and flavor ingredients that are harmful to human health and environment.
- Cosmetic Safety for Communities of Color and Professional Salon Workers Act- HR 5540
 - Mandates full salon product ingredient disclosure; access to translated data sheets; funding for research grants to identify chemicals of concern; funding for the development of green chemistry safer alternatives, and the creation of an inter-agency task force to share data and generate solutions to the toxic exposures.

PREVENTING CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING

Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning in NYC

LEVEL: City

POLICY TYPE: Legislation; Advocacy

STATUS: Introduced

CONTEXT: Lead exposure can cause damage at any age but is particularly dangerous for young children. Though lead exposure has been declining in New York City for more than a decade, in 2019, the Comptroller's office identified a severe lack of enforcement for Local Law 1 (passed in 2004) which aimed to eradicate childhood lead poisoning by 2010. The report found that 11,972 children diagnosed with lead exposure (5 mcg/dL or greater) were living in housing and urban development (HUD) apartments that should have been lead-free a long time ago.

ACTION: WE ACT is a leading member of the New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning, and we anchor a roundtable of leading lead poisoning prevention advocates, including Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, New York City League of Conservation Voters, Cooper Square Committee, and Montefiore Hospital, to name a few. Since 2019, the roundtable group has helped get 17 bills passed to improve lead poisoning prevention policies in New York City. We are working with the roundtable to draft and advance six bills that improve or fill gaps in existing law by mandating lead inspections in common spaces of apartment buildings, abating lead on friction surfaces, considering lead poisoning a nuisance, and requiring neuropsychological evaluation of children with lead exposure. Currently introduced legislation in City Council are:

- Intro 5: Automatic Audits of Landlord Self-Inspections Upon issuance of Peeling Lead Paint Violations
- Intro 6: Abatement of Lead Paint on Friction Surfaces
- Intro 193: Lead-based paint hazards in Common Areas of Dwellings
- Intro 200: Reporting on Contestations of DOHMH lead abatement order
- Intro 750: Proactive identification and inspection of dwellings where children are at risk of lead poisoning



The Coalition is working hard to pass three bills into law:

- Point of Sale Lead-Based Paint Disclosure Act (S. 2142A/A.6608A)
 - Ensures that testing homes for lead during the buying and selling stage happens and closes the loophole that allows property owners to avoid knowing their homes' lead status.
- The Renovation, Repair and Painting Act (S. 6554/A. 7117)
 - Enables the State to administrate federal Renovation, Repair, and Painting rules and conduct training, certification, and enforcement. A report from the Community Foundation of Buffalo estimated this bill would protect ~140,000 children under the age of 6 from lead exposure in ~483,000 homes each year.
- The Landlord Insurance for Lead-Based Paint Act (S. 3079A/A. 7488A)
 - Covers lead poisoning in a building owner's insurance policy to ensure that families who are victims of lead poisoning will be adequately compensated for medical bills and other lead-exposure related expenses and damages.

Lead Service Line Replacement Project

LEVEL: Federal

POLICY: Advocacy; Program

STATUS: Ongoing

CONTEXT: Lead is a toxic substance and children are the most vulnerable to lead contamination. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates at least 6 to 10 million lead service lines (LSL), which is a water pipe that is lined with lead, exist in the United States. These lines are primarily located in low-income communities and/or communities of color and feed into homes. However, to replace lead service lines is costly and often places low-income households at a disadvantage.

ACTION: WE ACT is part of a project that is creating an LSL Replacement inventory tool to overcome this challenge. The goal is to create a public-facing map for communities to use with local decision makers and utility leaders. This project will ensure that communities are able to accurately identify, locate, and advocate for the removal of these toxic lead pipes.



Lead Free Kids New York

LEVEL: State

POLICY TYPE: Legislation

STATUS: To Be Reintroduced

CONTEXT: New York has more children with elevated blood lead levels than any other state in the United States. And lead exposure is not only a problem in New York City but statewide; for example, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Buffalo has some of the highest rates of childhood lead poisoning in the nation.

ACTION: It is important to have statewide action to prevent childhood lead poisoning. As a steering committee member on the Lead Free Kids New York Coalition, WE ACT is addressing the issue through coalition building, policy development, and messaging.

East 125th Street Community Visioning Action Plan

LEVEL: City, State
POLICY TYPE: Advocacy
STATUS: Proposal

CONTEXT: A steadfast anchor for Black/African American social and economic life since the late 1800s, the 125th Street Corridor in East Harlem has been the birthplace of some of the country's most prominent cultural, political, and religious movements and icons. Going east, after 5th Avenue, though, the streetscape takes a visible turn, reflecting an overarching pattern of uneven economic growth in the East Harlem section of the corridor. Long viewed as a last bastion of affordability and Latino culture, East Harlem is on the verge of an unprecedented transformation. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has plans to create a transit hub by connecting the new Second Avenue Subway expansion with the East 125th Street Lexington Avenue Subway and Metro North stations. Without community-driven solutions, low-income communities of color in the neighborhood will continue to be hit the hardest by the harmful effects of gentrification.

ACTION: WE ACT is working with City and State agencies and legislators to implement the East 125th Street Community Visioning Action Plan to catalyze the economic, cultural and sustainability revitalization of East Harlem by leveraging new investments in the 125th Street Transit Corridor. The visioning plan creates more local economic opportunity using the cultural heritage and assets of the neighborhood as both a driver and enabler of economic development, a conduit to mitigate gentrification and advance greater climate resilience and environmental sustainability.

PFAS in Apparel Ban (S6291A/A7063A)

LEVEL: State
POLICY TYPE: Legislation
STATUS: Rulemaking

CONTEXT: Manhattan is a traffic-heavy borough, where private vehicles, trucks, and buses fill up the streets and emit air pollution that harms health. In 2019, former Governor Cuomo signed a law that establishes congestion pricing below 60th street in Manhattan.

The intention of the legislation is to reduce traffic and raise revenue for the MTA via a tolling program. Years later, congestion pricing still hasn't begun.

ACTION: Congestion pricing has been a controversial policy, and enactment is moving slowly. But now, Governor Hochul has voiced her support for congestion pricing and the program's plan is rolling out soon from the MTA. WE ACT is participating in a Environmental Justice Technical Advisory Group led by New York State MTA to push for congestion pricing to begin, and inform the technical plan to ensure the burden of air pollution and vehicle traffic does not fall on Northern Manhattan and other environmental justice communities. We believe it is important to advise on how congestion pricing should roll out to ensure that equity is central to the program.

Electrify School Buses

LEVEL: City, State, Federal
POLICY TYPE: Budget; Advocacy
STATUS: Funded

CONTEXT: Each day, the New York City school bus system transports about 150,000 students. Buses are a primary source of air pollution, and developing children are especially vulnerable to the negative health impacts of poor air quality such as asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, heart attacks, lung cancer, and premature death. In fact, a study found that school buses are self-polluting and expose passengers to exhaust levels that are 23 to 46 times higher than exposure levels that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers to be a significant risk for cancer. The study also found that operators and school-age passengers may be exposed to up to four times as much diesel exhaust – a known carcinogen – than someone traveling in a car directly behind that bus.

ACTION: New York City and New York State have mandated all school buses on the road be electric, zero emissions vehicles by 2035. WE ACT is on the steering committees of both the New York City Clean School Bus Coalition and the Alliance for Electric School Buses (AESB). Through these coalitions, WE ACT has been advocating for funding to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuel school buses – prioritizing funding to disadvantaged communities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean School Bus Program, created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, will invest \$5 billion over 5 years in clean school buses. The 2022 rebates will invest a total of \$70 million for electric buses in New York State. AESB is working closely with the EPA on the next round of funding; advocating for better prioritization criteria to ensure equity in funding allocation.

POLICIES INDEX

Funding a Just and Equitable Future	10
Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act	10
Environmental Protection Fund	10
Equitable Implementation of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act	10
Justice40 Initiative Implementation	10
Accountability and Public Participation	11
Environmental Justice Programs Funding (Local Law 60 & 64)	11
Community Benefits Agreements	11
Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) Implementation	11
Environmental Justice Law Implementation (S.2385/A.1564)	12
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) & Equitable Clean Energy Siting and Transmission	12
Civic Engagement and Voting Rights	13
Get Out The Vote	13
Voting Rights for a Fair Democracy	13
Air Pollution and Cumulative Exposure	14
Cumulative Impacts Analysis Requirements (S.8830/A.2103D)	14
Clearing the Toxic Air (S.4371D/A.6150B)	14
Environmental Justice For All Act	15
Multi-Pollutant Standards	15
Energy	16
Renewable Rikers Act (Local Laws 16, 17 and 31 of 2021)	16
New York Build Public Renewables Act (S.6453C/A.1466D)	16
Fighting Liquified Natural Gas Infrastructure	17
Energy Efficiency, Equity, and Jobs Act (S.3126C/A.3996C)	17
Energy Affordability Program	17
Extreme Heat	18
Extreme Heat Coalition	18
Expanding and Improving the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	18
Heating and Cooling Relief Act (H.R. 6437)	18
Expand and Permanently Fund the Be-A-Buddy Program	18
Healthy Housing	19
Good Cause Eviction (S.3082/A.5573)	19
NYCHA: Healthy Homes Campaign	19
Local Law 97	20
Accelerated Phaseout of Fuel Oil No. 4 (Introduction 0470)	20
2 Million Climate-Friendly, Electrified or Electrification-Ready Homes in New York by 2030	20
All Electric New Buildings Act	21
Out of Gas, In With Justice Pilot Program	21
Workforce Development and Education	22
Frontline Climate Corps	22
Climate Education in New York State (S.6837/A.9831 & S.6877/A.11143)	22
Waste and Sanitation	23
Zero Waste & Curbside Composting	23
Parks and Green Space	24
East Harlem Waterfront	24
Trees in Northern Manhattan	24
Toxics	25
Child Safe Products Act (S.501B/A.6286)	25
PFAS in Apparel Ban (S.6291A/A.7063A)	25
Safe Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Act (S.3331B/A.143A)	25
Mercury Out of Cosmetics (S.8291A/A.8630)	26
Safer Beauty Bills Package	26
Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning in NYC	26
Lead Free Kids New York	27
Lead Service Line Replacement Project	27
Transportation	28
East 125th Street Community Visioning Action Plan	28
Congestion Pricing	28
Electric School Buses	28

GEOGRAPHIC INDEX

New York City Policies

Environmental Justice Programs Funding (Local Law 60 & 64)	11
Community Benefits Agreements	11
Get Out The Vote	13
Renewable Rikers Act (Local Laws 16, 17 and 31 of 2021)	16
Expand and Permanently Fund the Be-A-Buddy Program	18
NYCHA: Healthy Homes Campaign	19
Local Law 97	20
Accelerated Phaseout of Fuel Oil No. 4 (Introduction 0470)	20
Zero Waste & Curbside Composting	23
East Harlem Waterfront	24
Trees in Northern Manhattan	24
Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning in NYC	26
East 125th Street Community Visioning Action Plan	28
Electric School Buses	28

New York State Policies

Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act	10
Environmental Protection Fund	10
Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) Implementation	11
Environmental Justice Law Implementation (S.2385/A.1564)	12
Cumulative Impacts Analysis Requirements (S.8830/A.2103D)	14
Clearing the Toxic Air (S.4371D/A.6150B)	14
New York Build Public Renewables Act (S.6453C/A.1466D)	16
Energy Efficiency, Equity, and Jobs Act (S.3126C/A.3996C)	17
Energy Affordability Program	17
Extreme Heat Coalition	18
Expanding and Improving the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	18
Good Cause Eviction (S.3082/A.5573)	19
2 Million Climate-Friendly, Electrified or Electrification-Ready Homes in New York by 2030	20
All Electric New Buildings Act	21
Out of Gas, In With Justice Pilot Program	21
Climate Education in New York State (S.6837/A.9831 & S.6877/A.11143)	22
Child Safe Products Act (S.501B/A.6286)	25
PFAS in Apparel Ban (S.6291A/A.7063A)	25
Safe Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Act (S.3331B/A.143A)	25
Mercury Out of Cosmetics (S.8291A/A.8630)	26
Lead Free Kids New York	27
East 125th Street Community Visioning Action Plan	28
Congestion Pricing	28
Electric School Buses	28

Federal Policies

Equitable Implementation of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act	10
Justice40 Initiative Implementation	10
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) & Equitable Clean Energy Siting and Transmission	12
Voting Rights for a Fair Democracy	13
Environmental Justice For All Act	15
Multi-Pollutant Standards	15
Fighting Liquified Natural Gas Infrastructure	17
Expanding and Improving the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	18
Heating and Cooling Relief Act (H.R. 6437)	18
Out of Gas, In With Justice Pilot Program	21
Frontline Climate Corps	22
Safer Beauty Bills Package	26
Lead Service Line Replacement Project	27
Electric School Buses	28



WE ACT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

1854 Amsterdam Avenue, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10031 // 212-961-1000

50 F Street, NW, Suite 550, Washington, DC 20001 // 202-800-5896

Web: weact.org // Facebook: [weactforej](https://www.facebook.com/weactforej) // Twitter: [weact4ej](https://twitter.com/weact4ej) // Instagram: [weact4ej](https://www.instagram.com/weact4ej)