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Contact:
Genevieve Friedman 212 784 5726
Gfriedman@groupgordon.com

Report Reveals New York's Biggest Polluters are Ramping up Lobbying to Oppose Climate Legislation

New York, NY – January 4, 2021 — The [PEAK Coalition](#) and [NY Renews Coalition](#) today released a [report](#) showing that large utilities, power producers, and fossil fuel industry groups have significantly increased the amount they spend on state and local lobbyists in an effort to stop or slow landmark climate justice bills on state lawmakers' agendas. [New York Lawyers for the Public Interest](#) (NYLPI), a member of the PEAK Coalition, conducted the research for the report, which is based on hundreds of lobbying disclosures filed with New York State since 2011.

Energy industry giants with interests in the New York market spent \$3 million per year on state and local lobbying in 2019 and the first half of 2020, topping the record amounts the industry spent in the run-up to the governor's 2013 decision to ban fracking statewide. This heightened spending continued despite the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis.

"New York's energy sector should be laser-focused on making the huge investments in renewables and efficiency needed to comply with our state's climate and environmental justice laws," said **Justin Wood, Director of Organizing and Strategic Research at NYLPI** and one of the report's lead authors. "Instead, these corporations are hiring more lobbyists in an attempt to ram through unpopular fossil fuel projects like new power plants and gas pipelines. This threatens to exacerbate climate change and worsen environmental health disparities among New Yorkers of color and low-income communities already hit hardest by the pandemic."

As with the battle over fracking, the lobbying boom is driven by large well-financed trade groups, corporations, and private equity funds. The report details the investments made by the biggest spenders, including the American Petroleum Institute, Arclight Capital, NRG, National Grid, and Consolidated Edison. Emissions data from the Environmental Protection Agency shows that several of these companies are also among the biggest polluters in New York State.

The report also highlights that the spike in payments to industry lobbyists coincides with the state legislature's introduction of bills to curb climate emissions and create sustainable energy jobs in disadvantaged communities, such as the landmark NYS Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

"This increase in lobbying by the energy industry in New York is deeply troubling but at the same time unsurprising. Instead of putting their resources towards solutions that move us closer to the CLCPA's goals, they spend their money and political capital putting up road blocks in our quest for a Just Transition. Sadly, environmental justice communities are the ones that have suffered and will continue to suffer from decisions like these. NYC-EJA, as it has always done in the past, will continue to advocate and fight for those most affected," said **Carlos Garcia, Energy Planner at the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance.**

"Fossil fuel companies have for too long poisoned Black, brown and low-income communities while buying their way out of consequences. Instead of lining the pockets of Albany lobbying firms and state legislators, we need to make big polluters pay their fair share. Only when they are made to bear the cost of that harm can we invest the billions of dollars we need in a just, green, renewable future for all New Yorkers," said **Stephan Edel, NY Renews Coalition Coordinator.**

"The disparate impact of Covid19 and climate change is a constant reminder that polluting infrastructure such as dirty peaker power plants have been overwhelmingly sited in environmental justice communities like Sunset Park, Brooklyn, where Astoria Generating Company, the private owner of two large plants, is currently seeking to build a new fossil fuel plant. Inequities in our energy system are a model of environmental racism rooted in the continued investment in fossil fuels. To meet the state's Climate Leadership and Community Protection emission reductions, clean energy, and equity mandates we must move money to frontline communities for clean energy projects and stop fossil fuel developers from perpetuating conventional investments in dirty energy and the kind of injustice that costs us our lives," said **Elizabeth Yeampierre, Executive Director of UPROSE.**

The full report is available [here](#).

About the PEAK Coalition

The PEAK Coalition includes UPROSE, THE POINT CDC, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA), New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI), which have come together to end the long-standing pollution burden power plants impose on the City's most climate-vulnerable people. For more information, please visit www.peakcoalition.org.

About NY Renews

NY Renews is a coalition of over 200 environmental, justice, faith, labor, and community groups - and the force behind the nation's most progressive climate law. For more information, please visit www.nyrenews.org.

About New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI)

Founded more than 40 years ago by leaders of the bar, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest is a community-driven civil rights organization that pursues equality and justice for all New Yorkers. NYLPI works toward a New York where all people can thrive in their communities, with quality healthcare and housing, safe jobs, good schools, and healthy neighborhoods. For more information, please visit www.nylpi.org.

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