

## Chapter 6. Advancing Climate Justice

### 6.1 Climate Justice and the Climate Act

In addition to advancing New York’s nation-leading climate and energy agenda, a fundamental objective of the Climate Act is to ensure that New York’s transition to a clean energy economy works to address the structural disadvantages that have caused historically marginalized communities (e.g., people of color, indigenous, low-income, women) to bear a disproportionate burden of the impacts of climate change and pollution. Historically marginalized communities typically experience a lower life expectancy and quality of life as measured by environmental burdens, climate change risks, population characteristics, and health vulnerabilities. Through enshrining equity objectives in State investments, program design, and internal and external engagement strategies, this Scoping Plan demonstrates how the Climate Act will work to address past discrimination. Implementation will create a model where achieving a high standard of economic well-being and health in every community is the baseline condition of climate action.

The Climate Act requires all State agencies, offices, authorities, and divisions to prioritize reductions of GHGs and co-pollutants in Disadvantaged Communities and shall not disproportionately burden Disadvantaged Communities when considering and issuing administrative approvals and decisions.<sup>45</sup> Actions undertaken by the State to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) and co-pollutant emissions should prioritize the safety and health of Disadvantaged Communities, control for potential regressive impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, and prioritize the allocation of public investments to these communities. In addition, this Scoping Plan recognizes that women, femmes, youth, and children are more vulnerable to the climate crisis and acknowledges the need to specifically provide support and opportunities to these populations who are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis.

In identifying those who bear a disproportionate burden of the impacts of climate change and pollution, a person’s race and wealth are the two most predictive factors. This is attributable to a history of marginalization, such as racial and ethnic discrimination across public institutions, which has created a structural disadvantage and made it particularly difficult for some New Yorkers to access basic needs such as clean air and water, affordable energy and housing, and quality employment opportunities. The stress and hardship of these struggles is heightened by the destructive impacts of climate change from both single extreme weather events and ongoing, low-intensity events.

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<sup>45</sup> Climate Act § 7(3).

The Climate Act seeks to address the disproportionate burden that Disadvantaged Communities have borne from past and current emissions in many ways. The Climate Act ensures that Disadvantaged Communities will reap the benefits of New York’s transition to a clean energy economy, including by requiring that certain State investments deliver benefits to these communities.<sup>46</sup> Through the work of the Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG), the Climate Act ensures that these communities are consulted and will benefit from New York’s climate action. Input from the CJWG will inform the development of climate policies and investment programs designed to deliver meaningful and equitable benefits to Disadvantaged Communities. The Climate Act also contains important provisions that ensure agency decision-making does not disproportionately burden Disadvantaged Communities and prioritizes reductions of GHG emissions and co-pollutants in these communities. These are priorities that encompass all State agencies and authorities, and a coordinated approach to implementation is needed to ensure these provisions of law are integrated into agency actions.

The Climate Act requires the identification of the Disadvantaged Communities that bear such disproportionate burdens so the State may ensure that they benefit equitably from New York State’s transition to a clean energy economy. This objective is paramount in State efforts involving GHG emission and co-pollutant reduction, clean energy deployment, and climate adaptation and resilience, and it is foundational to the strategies in this Scoping Plan. The desired outcome is to make every neighborhood and community healthy and resilient to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and to provide quality jobs in safe work environments for all New Yorkers in a thriving clean energy economy.

### ***Climate Justice Working Group***

The Climate Act established the CJWG, which comprises representatives from environmental justice communities statewide, including three members from New York City communities, three members from rural communities, and three members from urban communities in upstate New York, as well as representatives from New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the New York State Department of Health (DOH), the New York State Department of Labor (DOL), and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). The composition of the CJWG was intended to ensure that the perspective of environmental justice communities from across New York State were included in the work of the group. Among other responsibilities, the CJWG was tasked with developing the definition of Disadvantaged Communities and has an important advisory role, providing

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<sup>46</sup> ECL § 75-0117.

strategic advice to the Climate Action Council (Council) for incorporating the needs of Disadvantaged Communities in the Scoping Plan. The CJWG was formed in June 2020 and held 27 public meetings through 2022.

### ***Identifying New York’s Disadvantaged Communities***

A primary task of the CJWG is to develop the criteria by which a community in New York can be designated as a Disadvantaged Community under the Climate Act. The Climate Act defines Disadvantaged Communities as “communities that bear burdens of negative public health effects, environmental pollution, impacts of climate change, and possess certain socioeconomic criteria, or comprise high-concentrations of low- and moderate- income households...”<sup>47</sup> The establishment of the Disadvantaged Communities criteria is fundamental to many provisions of the Climate Act and key to successful implementation of this Scoping Plan in prioritizing reductions of GHG emissions and co-pollutants in these communities and ensuring no disproportionate burdens on such communities.

In developing the draft Disadvantaged Communities criteria, the CJWG considered climate change risk, environmental burden, public health, and socioeconomic factors, as outlined by the Climate Act. The CJWG assessed nearly 170 climate, health, and socio-demographic indicators and analyzed more than 100 indicators that had consistent, granular, and up-to date statewide data available. The CJWG members also brought their perspective, familiarity, and experience working with frontline communities across the State. This first-hand knowledge helped to incorporate the lived experiences of residents of frontline communities into the process. Such an approach represents an effort to create a holistic statewide standard of climate justice that incorporates a broad range of valid factors and knowledge inputs. Details on the methodology, including census tract scoring and analysis of each indicator, is available on the Climate Act website.<sup>48</sup>

The CJWG finalized the draft criteria in December 2021 and released the draft criteria for public comment, along with mapping tool to visualize the Disadvantaged Communities identified by the draft criteria, on March 9, 2022. The Climate Act required the CJWG to undertake an extensive public input process before finalizing the criteria, including posting the draft criteria online, hosting at least six regional public hearings, and accepting public comments for at least 120 days. The CJWG, DEC, and

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<sup>48</sup> The Climate Act website can be accessed at [climate.ny.gov](https://climate.ny.gov).

NYSERDA held 11 in-person and virtual public hearings and three educational webinars on the draft criteria during the public comment period. The public comment period closed after 150 days on August 5, 2022, with approximately 3,000 comments received. The CJWG will review and assess the public comments as they work to finalize the Disadvantaged Communities criteria. After finalization, the Climate Act requires the CJWG to meet annually to review the criteria and methodology for identifying Disadvantaged Communities, and to make updates where necessary.

### ***Directing Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities***

In transforming New York’s energy economy and mitigating climate change, the Climate Act mandates an investment of certain benefits of State agencies, authorities, and entities to Disadvantaged Communities. Disadvantaged Communities must receive a minimum of 35% of benefits of spending on clean energy and energy efficiency programs, projects, or investments in the areas of housing, workforce development, pollution reduction, low-income energy assistance, energy, transportation, and economic development, with a goal of 40%.<sup>49</sup> DEC and NYSERDA, in consultation with the CJWG and other relevant stakeholders, are developing a methodology for defining these benefits. The definition of Disadvantaged Communities and the methodology for defining benefits will be provided to all State agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to directing benefits to Disadvantaged Communities as required by the Climate Act.

New York State’s clean energy and energy efficiency investments should provide a path for Disadvantaged Communities to participate in and benefit from the clean energy transition. These investments can provide a number of benefits for Disadvantaged Communities, including air quality improvements associated with the reduction of fossil fuel combustion in buildings, transportation, and power generation; energy bill savings from energy efficiency improvements to homes and small businesses; workforce and small business development and employment opportunities; the advancement of community self-determination through community-based organization capacity-building; and the remediation or redevelopment of underused sites within Disadvantaged Communities such as brownfields, abandoned commercial sites, landfills, or otherwise dilapidated land. Given the underinvestment in New York’s Disadvantaged Communities, it will equally be important for the State’s clean energy portfolio to drive economic development and job growth within these communities. As a means of doing so, as discussed in *Chapter 7. Just Transition*, the State should utilize labor standards and

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<sup>49</sup> ECL § 75-0117.

undertake concerted efforts to drive increased workforce diversity and equity through recruitment efforts, retention policies, and promotion opportunities. In demonstrating a commitment to meeting or exceeding the benefits requirements of the Climate Act, the State has already begun adapting clean energy and energy efficiency investments to prioritize Disadvantaged Communities. Examples of these actions are:

- **Clean Green Schools:** \$59 million was made available by NYSERDA to serve more than 500 P-12 schools in Disadvantaged Communities with clean energy and energy efficiency solutions, creating a healthier learning environment in schools across New York State. In addition, a minimum of \$3 million will be provided to schools in Disadvantaged Communities participating in the Clean Green Schools program to support education, career awareness, and training related to clean energy and energy efficiency retrofit projects, careers, and jobs.
- **NY Sun Solar Equity Framework:** \$200 million was directed to increase access to solar energy for low- to moderate-income (LMI) households, affordable housing, and environmental justice communities.
- **EmPower New York:** EmPower New York incorporated a geo-eligibility component, streamlining eligibility determinations for households located in communities with more than 50% of residents at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.
- **Regional Clean Energy Hubs:** \$52.6 million was made available to establish clean energy hubs in each of the 10 economic development regions of the State and to build capacity at the local level to position Disadvantaged Communities to benefit from the emerging clean energy economy. Initiatives will include outreach and education, increasing access to clean energy programs and resources, conducting equitable stakeholder engagement, and connecting residents and small businesses with workforce or business development opportunities.
- **Climate Justice Fellowships:** \$6 million was made available to support individuals residing in Disadvantaged Communities or from priority populations to gain experience working in clean energy or climate justice through entities such as community-based organizations, universities, municipalities, climate tech innovators/start-ups, and clean energy businesses to advance climate justice and clean energy priorities for Disadvantaged Communities, including assisting with community engagement activities (e.g., plan, policy, or project) or clean energy project development and implementation.
- **New York Clean Transportation Prizes:** In November 2022, NYSERDA, in collaboration with New York State Department of Public Service (DPS) and DEC, announced 10 awards funding innovative electric transportation approaches that improve air quality and expand access to mobility in Disadvantaged Communities across the state through this \$85 million program.

- **Large Scale Renewables and CES:** In an October 15, 2020 Order, the PSC directed NYSEERDA to take measures to ensure that interests of Disadvantaged Communities are valued in all future Clean Energy Standard (CES) procurements.

In addition, other policies established through Executive Orders or legislation can complement these investments by creating conditions for positive outcomes for Disadvantaged Communities. For example, the 2022 State of the State directed State entities to develop an Extreme Heat Action Plan to address the impacts of extreme heat on disadvantaged and other heat vulnerable communities. The interagency approach will ensure that the issue of extreme heat is addressed with a more holistic approach than any individual entity, program, or investment could accomplish. In addition, Executive Order 22 requires affected State entities to maximize efforts to lower the impact of their operations, including emissions released from State building and transportation operations and waste generation, and directs State entities to prioritize efforts to reduce emissions from their operations in Disadvantaged Communities.

To evaluate compliance with the Climate Act’s requirement for Disadvantaged Communities to receive at least 35% of the benefits of clean energy and energy efficiency spending, with a goal of 40%, the State’s program administrators will track and report on the investments and benefits occurring in Disadvantaged Communities. It is expected that reporting will include an accounting of clean energy and energy efficiency funding invested in Disadvantaged Communities and a quantification of measurable co-benefits of these investments such as energy savings, bill savings, workforce development, and projected health impacts. As data collection methods evolve, additional qualitative or quantitative outcomes for Disadvantaged Communities may be reported on, such as those associated with economic development or other aspects of the clean energy transition.

## **6.2 Prioritizing Measures to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Co-Pollutants in Disadvantaged Communities**

Prioritizing emissions reduction in Disadvantaged Communities should help to prevent the formation or existence of emission “hotspots” that occur when certain sources maintain or increase higher levels of co-pollutant emissions despite a reduction in emissions statewide. A broad range of factors may contribute to high concentrations of pollutants in a given location that create a hotspot. The result can be unhealthy air quality, particularly for sensitive populations such as expectant mothers, children, the elderly, people of low socio-economic status, and people with pre-existing medical conditions.

Fortunately, the risk of hotspots will be dramatically reduced by this Scoping Plan’s combination of sector-based investment and regulatory strategies designed to decarbonize and substantially reduce or eliminate the emission of unhealthy co-pollutants from mobile and stationary sources. Importantly, this

Scoping Plan also leverages multiple initiatives involving the State’s partnership with Disadvantaged Communities to target hotspots. In addition to monitoring the air quality of Disadvantaged Communities, the State should align programmatic resources to increase the adoption of clean energy solutions across sectors by tailoring incentive programs to address the specific barriers and opportunities within Disadvantaged Communities and by increasing outreach and awareness through community-based initiatives such as the Regional Clean Energy Hubs. Together, these elements will ensure that Disadvantaged Communities experience improved, healthy air quality in a socially beneficial and holistic manner.

The Climate Act requires that the State prioritize measures to maximize reductions of GHG emissions and co-pollutants in Disadvantaged Communities. Strategies that reduce New York’s reliance on fossil fuels not only reduce GHG emissions but also reduce co-pollutants, leading to corresponding benefits to Disadvantaged Communities. As New York approaches full decarbonization by 2050, emissions of unhealthy pollutants like fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) (which contribute to particulate matter and ozone formation), and various toxic pollutants will see commensurate declines statewide, prioritized in Disadvantaged Communities.

In this Scoping Plan, benefits and impacts to Disadvantaged Communities are woven throughout the recommended strategies for reducing GHG emissions and co-pollutants as described in more detail in *Sector Strategies*. Examples of these strategies are:

- Financial incentives for the electrification of trucks and buses are being targeted in the first instance to vehicles operating in areas overburdened by air pollution. Zero-emission vehicles sales mandates and fleet electrification requirements will drive the electrification of fleets operating in and through these Disadvantaged Communities, including drayage fleets serving port areas. In addition, until the supply chain and infrastructure capacity for an electric trucking sector can be fully brought to fruition around midcentury, the more immediate replacement of diesel with renewable diesel and green hydrogen fuel cells, which is non-combusted hydrogen generated entirely by renewable energy, will reduce harmful PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions.
- In the power sector, incentives for distributed energy resources (DERs) and energy storage will be targeted to Disadvantaged Communities, reducing GHG emissions from peaking power plants in those locations.
- In residential and commercial buildings, incentives for energy efficiency upgrades and clean heating and cooling, including heat pumps, will be targeted to LMI and Disadvantaged

Communities, reducing both costs and emissions in those communities. Reducing fossil natural gas combustion in buildings results in improved indoor air quality and healthier living spaces.

- Diverting organics and capturing methane from landfill facilities in Disadvantaged Communities reduces landfill odors that significantly impact the quality of life and pose potential health impacts for those communities. Waste reduction and increased recycling will reduce waste hauling and related emissions.
- Alternative manure management strategies in the agricultural sector can help prevent excessive ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, methane, and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions in rural Disadvantaged Communities.

Collectively, implementation of these and other measures in this Scoping Plan will ensure substantial reductions of GHGs and co-pollutants in communities overburdened with harmful pollution. As the Scoping Plan is implemented, State entities are required to ensure that the State's actions do not disproportionately burden Disadvantaged Communities and adhere to the requirements of the Climate Act to prioritize reductions of GHG emissions and co-pollutants in Disadvantaged Communities in their programs and policies.<sup>50</sup> This includes the requirements of Section 7(3) of the Climate Act in agency decision-making. State agencies will also prioritize compliance with the Climate Act's investment provision that requires that Disadvantaged Communities receive at least 35% of the benefit of the funds of clean energy and energy efficiency spending, with a goal of 40%.<sup>51</sup>

### ***Community Air Monitoring in Disadvantaged Communities***

The Climate Act created a program to measure and record air pollutant concentrations in the ambient air at or near places like hospitals, schools, and day care centers in Disadvantaged Communities and to use this information to create a strategy to reduce emissions of toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants in Disadvantaged Communities with high exposure burdens. The Climate Act requires that DEC conduct this Statewide Community Air Monitoring program in no less than four Disadvantaged Communities that have been identified as the highest priority due to high air pollution exposure burdens.

In consultation with the CJWG and community leaders, DEC and NYSERDA developed air pollution burden indicators that were used to identify Disadvantaged Communities to deploy mobile air monitoring sensor technology to collect air quality data on a more local level. Exceeding the four required by the Climate Act, 10 communities were identified as having a disproportionate air pollution burden. These

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<sup>50</sup> Climate Act § 7(3).

<sup>51</sup> ECL § 75-0117.



communities are Buffalo/Niagara Falls/Tonawanda, Capital Region, Bronx, Manhattan, Rochester, Syracuse, Mount Vernon/Yonkers/New Rochelle, Brooklyn, Queens, and Hempstead/Uniondale/Westbury/New Cassel. Monitoring will include GHG emissions and other co-pollutants. The monitoring data, along with other air monitoring data, will help provide a comprehensive picture of air quality in communities that are home to up to five million New Yorkers. The results of this monitoring effort will advance the Climate Act's directive to reduce emissions in communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution and to help address health disparities due to this pollution.

The air monitoring effort will be bolstered by an additional \$2 million in grants that will support community-led, complementary air monitoring efforts, and \$1 million in Community Air Monitoring Capacity Building Grants. The statewide community air monitoring program is scheduled to be completed in the third quarter of 2023. DEC will provide quarterly project updates to the 10 communities and post these preliminary data summaries to the DEC website.<sup>52</sup> By June 1, 2024, DEC will prepare, in consultation with the CJWG and community-based organizations, strategies to reduce emissions of toxic and criteria air pollutants in Disadvantaged Communities. These strategies will include methods for assessing and identifying the emissions sources, estimating their relative contribution to elevated exposure to air pollution, and assessing measures to reduce emissions from these sources. DEC will use the strategies to design community emissions reduction programs in Disadvantaged Communities.

### **6.3 Barriers and Opportunities Report**

Pursuant to Section 6 of the Climate Act, to ensure that the material benefits of mitigating and adapting to climate change are realized in Disadvantaged Communities, DEC worked with NYSERDA, NYPA, other State agencies, the Council, and the CJWG to prepare a report on barriers to and opportunities for access to and/or community ownership of several services and commodities in Disadvantaged Communities. The final report was published in December of 2021 and provides a suite of recommendations for New York State agencies to design climate mitigation and adaption programs through a lens of justice.<sup>53</sup>

The requirement that at least 35%, with a goal of 40%, of the benefits of spending on clean energy and energy efficiency programs be realized in Disadvantaged Communities is meant to ensure Disadvantaged Communities will benefit from State actions promoting clean energy. However, for these benefits to

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<sup>52</sup> Additional information on DEC's Community Air Monitoring Initiative can be accessed at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/125320.html>.

<sup>53</sup> New York State. December 2021. *New York State Disadvantaged Communities Barriers and Opportunities Report*.

effectively eliminate climate and pollution burdens, the programs delivering them must account for the circumstances that created the structural disadvantages faced by communities. A continuation of the status quo in the way programs are designed and administered would constrain the extent and impact of the benefits they deliver. Cognizant of the need to understand and update these methods, the Climate Act established a process to examine how the State’s current approach to program design and administration could be improved to yield greater results for Disadvantaged Communities as they are implemented.

The Barriers and Opportunities Report identifies the barriers to, and opportunities for, access to, or community ownership of, services and commodities in Disadvantaged Communities in the following five areas:

- Distributed renewable energy generation
- Energy efficiency and weatherization investments
- Zero-emission and low-emission transportation options
- Adaptation measures to improve the resilience of homes and local infrastructure to the impacts of climate change, including but not limited to microgrids
- Other services and infrastructure that can reduce the risks associated with climate-related hazards, including but not limited to:
  - Shelters and cool rooms during extreme heat events
  - Shelters during flooding events
  - Medical treatment for asthma and other conditions that could be exacerbated by climate-related events

Notably, the inclusion of climate adaptation measures and climate-related hazard risk reduction in this report demonstrates the Climate Act’s intent to embed equity within both State clean energy and climate resilience programs.

Pursuant to the Climate Act, the recommendations from the Barriers and Opportunities Report are included in this Scoping Plan.

### ***Barriers and Opportunities Report Findings***

The report identifies four categories of barriers that prevent Disadvantaged Communities from receiving fair and equal access and ownership in the five areas of services and commodities listed above.

- **Physical and Economic Structures and Conditions:** Baseline conditions of physical or economic systems that impede access, use, or ownership of programs or solutions

- **Financial and Knowledge Resources and Capacity:** Insufficient resources, including financial resources, time, staffing or individuals on the household, agency, organization, or municipal level
- **Perspectives and Information:** Limited information, competing priorities and preferences, or lived experiences, including historical patterns of interaction that have eroded trust and impede awareness of and access to programs or services
- **Programmatic Design and Implementation:** Data and knowledge gaps related to lack of alignment between agencies and program design constraints

The report describes examples of each of these barriers, the scale at which they exist, and the relevant service and commodity areas they apply to. To overcome them, the report makes eight recommendations, considered as high-level principles, which are organized under three themes, as provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Barriers and Opportunities Report Recommendations by Theme Area**

<b>Ensure Processes are Inclusive</b>	1. Co-design programs or projects with and for communities.	As appropriate, all State entities are expected to incorporate these three themes and eight recommendations into their program administration and process activities related to implementation of the Climate Act.	
	2. Provide meaningful opportunities for public input in government processes and proceedings.		
	3. Work across intersecting issues and interests to address needs holistically.		
<b>Streamline Program Access</b>	4. Transition to program models that require little to no effort to participate and benefit.		
	5. Establish people-centered policies, programs, and funding across local, State, and federal governments.		
	6. Find and support resource-constrained local governments.		
<b>Address Emerging Issues</b>	7. Mobilize citizen participation and action.		The Barriers and Opportunities Report recommends that State
	8. Improve housing conditions and adherence to local building codes.		

agencies and authorities conduct a self-assessment and barriers analysis related to their policies and programs guided by the findings in the Report. In conducting the self-assessment and barriers analysis, each State entity should be expected to:

- Identify appropriate program staff to conduct the work and phase it in according to a feasible and impactful timeline
- Conduct a self-assessment and barriers analysis that includes identifying the barriers and opportunities identified in the Report that are applicable to the agency or authority’s portfolio

- Translate the results into a plan that identifies the relevant barriers and opportunities, specific workstreams that the agency or authority will undertake to address these barriers and opportunities, a timeline for each workstream, and the expected outcome of each workstream

The self-assessment and barriers analysis will help State entities systematically identify the barriers and opportunities to serving Disadvantaged Communities that are unique to their missions and create calibrated implementation strategies.

## **6.4 Engagement on the Scoping Plan**

The consideration of benefits and impacts that GHG emissions mitigation strategies may have on Disadvantaged Communities was integral to the development of this Scoping Plan. The Council sought robust engagement with environmental justice organizations throughout the process to ensure these perspectives were prioritized in this Scoping Plan. Members of environmental justice organizations were represented on all the Council’s Advisory Panels and the Just Transition Working Group (JTWG), which was vital to ensuring that the perspective of Disadvantaged Communities was included in the development of their respective recommendations.

In addition, the Advisory Panels and JTWG consulted with the CJWG as they were developing their recommendations. These bodies delivered their recommendations to the Council in the spring of 2021. The Council consulted with the CJWG on the Advisory Panel and JTWG recommendations. The CJWG provided feedback on all Advisory Panel and JTWG recommendations at Council meetings in the summer of 2021, with slides and recorded presentations available on the Climate Act website. The sectoral strategies in this Scoping Plan incorporate CJWG feedback and note where the group provided feedback on specific strategies. A compilation of the feedback provided by the CJWG is provided in Appendix B. The Council continued engagement with and received feedback from the CJWG in 2022 on the development of the Scoping Plan, particularly on the development of *Chapter 17. Economywide Strategies*.

In addition, in recognition of the unique government-to-government relationship and shared values around environmental protection, the State provided information and offered consultation with all State and federally recognized Indian Nations with territories that share boundaries in New York State on matters before the Council and CJWG. Presentations on the Climate Act were provided at the 2021 and 2022 Indian Nations Leadership Meetings hosted jointly by DEC, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA), and Nations' leadership, which included information and discussions about the draft Scoping Plan and draft Disadvantaged Communities criteria.

The Scoping Plan intends to address past practices where historically marginalized and overburdened communities were excluded from State decision-making processes. The Council expects that all State entities will work to improve engagement with residents and representatives of Disadvantaged Communities to identify and understand the barriers and opportunities at the local level to increase participation in the clean energy transition. This includes ensuring that agencies and authorities are creating conditions for communities that would not typically engage in administrative processes to do so. In addition, in the implementation of this Scoping Plan, including rulemaking processes, administrative planning, and investment strategies, relevant New York State agencies, authorities, and entities will seek to consult with recognized Indigenous Nations with whom they share overlapping interests, in accordance with consultation processes.