

1 **2024 NYSAC Fall Seminar**
2 **Standing Committee on Climate Action, Energy & Environment**
3 **Resolution #4**

4
5 **Resolution Calling on New York State to Address County Climate Concerns**
6 **and Support Local Government Initiatives**

7
8 **WHEREAS**, counties across New York State are actively identifying and addressing
9 key challenges to meet state and local climate goals; and

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11 **WHEREAS**, effective coordination and communication between state agencies, public
12 utilities, and state and local government are essential for achieving these objectives and
13 balancing climate goals with other local priorities; and

14
15 **WHEREAS**, counties have identified several pressing concerns and priorities that must
16 be addressed to meet the Climate Act goals in a manner that ensures equity, maximizes
17 community buy-in, and aligns with other state and local goals:

- 18 • **Agricultural Land Protection:** Incentives are needed to encourage the
19 installation of solar panels on non-agricultural land, such as parking lots and
20 rooftops. This strategy will mitigate development pressures on vital farmland
21 while advancing renewable energy goals; and
- 22 • **Transportation Investments:** Significant investment in community
23 appropriate micro-transit systems, particularly in rural areas, and active
24 transportation infrastructure, such as bike lanes and pedestrian paths, is
25 necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and enhance
26 public safety; and
- 27 • **Establishment of Clean Energy Hubs:** Regional clean energy hubs,
28 functioning under a hub-and-spoke model with 58 state-funded county
29 sustainability coordinators, can bolster local clean energy initiatives and enhance
30 the dissemination of information and resources; and
- 31 • **Landfill Capacity:** Addressing the solid waste crisis, planning for future landfill
32 capacity, and investing in innovative technologies is crucial, as the 2023-32 New
33 York State Solid Waste Management Plan estimates that the state’s 25 municipal
34 solid waste (MSW) landfills have a combined capacity life of only 16 years, and
35 sending MSW out of state undermines the goals of the Climate Act; and
- 36 • **Open Space Conservation:** Allocating \$200 million from the Environmental
37 Bond Act for municipalities and non-profits to purchase open space is essential
38 for supporting New York State in meeting its open space conservation goals; and
- 39 • **Transition to Electric Vehicles (EVs):** Local government concerns with the
40 transition to EVs must be addressed, including those related to charging

1 infrastructure availability and reliability, the impact of cold temperatures on
2 battery range and efficiency, and the shortage of mechanics trained to work on
3 these vehicles; and

- 4 • **Improve Cost Estimates and Communication to Local Governments
5 and the General Public on the Timeline of Costs and Savings:** A recent
6 audit from the New York State Comptroller identified several items the state
7 needs to improve including better and more frequent communication with
8 stakeholders and more accurate cost estimates to help improve the likelihood of
9 success in achieving the state’s climate goals. The lack of cost estimates for local
10 governments and taxpayers, along with the extent to which ratepayers will be
11 responsible for Climate Act implementation costs must be clarified and updated
12 regularly when major departures from plans occur.

13
14 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the New York State Association of
15 Counties (NYSAC) calls on Governor Kathy Hochul to sign S.2003-A (May)/A.5909-A
16 (Epstein) into law to establish a Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) charged with
17 coordinating efforts across all state agencies to address climate change mitigation and
18 sustainability efforts; and

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20 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that NYSAC urges the Governor and Legislature to
21 negotiate chapter amendments to this legislation that require the CSO to also coordinate
22 with local governments to gather and address local concerns, including those outlined in
23 this resolution; and

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25 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** this resolution shall be forwarded to the counties of
26 New York State urging member counties to enact similar resolutions; and

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28 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that copies of this resolution be forwarded to
29 Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Legislature, the New York State
30 Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the New York State Energy
31 Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the Department of Agriculture and
32 Markets (AGM), the Department of State (DOS), and all others deemed necessary and
33 proper.