



October 7, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Stop the Gowanus Fracked Gas Plant in New York City

Dear Governor Hochul,

We, the undersigned elected officials, urge you to deny the Astoria Generating Company, L.P. the permits for building a new fracked gas facility, the Gowanus Repowering Project, in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. **We were encouraged by the state's decision to reject the Williams NESE pipeline, and urge you to act similarly by stopping the Gowanus Repowering Project.**

The Gowanus fracked gas plant is an affront to environmental justice, threatening the health of the communities of color in which it is located. It would undermine the aggressive renewable energy goals contained in New York's new climate law. We ask that your administration deny the permits for the proposed plant due to the hazards it poses to our air and water, and we ask you to help lead the charge towards a 100% renewable New York.

We urge you to stop the Gowanus Repowering Project for the following reasons:

- 1) **The project is in clear violation of the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act**, which mandates 100% carbon neutral electricity by 2040 and 70% renewable electricity by 2030. If we are to have any shot of tackling the climate crisis, we cannot afford to break the state's own climate law. The pollution from this plant, including greenhouse gases like carbon and

methane, will only worsen the impacts of climate change on New York, and would keep us from achieving these vital renewable electricity goals.¹

- 2) Like other gas-fired peaker plants, the Gowanus Repowering Project is an attempt to save dirty, polluting assets by increasing the plant's use of fossil fuels instead of decommissioning the facility and meeting our electricity needs through energy efficiency and renewable sources. In contrast to the current facility, which operates only to meet peak demand (less 5% of the year), this proposal would have the facility run more frequently, which would increase total greenhouse gas emissions.
- 3) The facility's air pollution would directly impact Sunset Park, an Environmental Justice community which is predominately Latinx, Asian and African American. Working class neighborhoods and communities of color are consistently forced to deal with the most immediate impacts of climate change, and this plant would continue that shameful legacy. **Especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic**, the added regional air pollutants (including but not limited to sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, nitrogen oxide, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane, benzene, sulfuric acid, particulate matter and mercury) pose incredible public health risks and leave vulnerable communities susceptible to chronic illnesses, asthma and COPD, among many other health problems.²
- 4) The Gowanus canal is one the most polluted waterways in the country, and the continued burning of fossil fuels directly on the water is not a way to improve that. Following the recommendation of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the EPA designated the Gowanus canal as a Superfund site, and remediation efforts have been put into place since 2010.³ The proposed facility would float literally right on the water, and any leak or spills would threaten the already fragile ecosystem that our state and federal agencies have committed to clean up.

¹ "New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act" <https://climate.ny.gov/>. Accessed 9 Jul. 2020.

² Ford, Leah, and Kira Burkhart. "Already Hard To Breathe: Coronavirus Compounded By Bad" 23 Mar. 2020, <https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/news/already-hard-breathe-coronavirus-compounded-bad-air-quality>. Accessed 9 Jul. 2020.

³ "GOWANUS CANAL | Superfund Site Profile - EPA." <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.schedule&id=0206222>. Accessed 9 Jul. 2020.

- 5) The canal is considered a 'public recreational space' and organizations like Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club and Urban Divers Estuary Conservancy utilize the waterway for waterfront access and canal education.⁴ Along with hindering remediation efforts, the facility and its toxic emissions would be an eyesore for nearby residents and negatively impact boaters who use the canal for recreational purposes.
- 6) In his 2020 State of the City address, Mayor DeBlasio affirmed New York City's opposition to "all new fossil fuel infrastructure including power plant expansion, pipelines, or terminals that expands the use of fossil fuels in our city". DeBlasio has since signed an executive order firming the city's opposition to new fossil fuel infrastructure.⁵
- 7) More and better jobs can be produced in the renewable energy sector. Investments in more solar, wind and battery storage, as laid out in the **Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act**⁶, would bring jobs and tax revenue to the city and state without polluting our air and water and exacerbating climate change. For communities that have displaced workers from the fossil-fuel industry, we urge a fair and just transition plan that provides training and placement for workers in unionized jobs in other industries, including the rapidly growing renewable energy economy.

In sum, New York does not need the Gowanus Repowering Project to meet its energy needs. The state has taken several good first steps to tackling climate change, including denial of permits for the Williams NESE pipeline, awarding of the \$250 Million Green Energy Grant to Westchester County after Con Edison's gas moratorium, and reprimanding National Grid for its fraudulent claims about a 'gas shortage' to deny service to New Yorkers.

With the signing of our state's climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, it is clear the next step is to stop new fossil fuel infrastructure. Rather than falling for the fossil fuel industry's bait-and-switch tactics to replace peaker plants with new fracked gas facilities, we urge you to stop the Gowanus Repowering Project, work to decommission existing peaker plants, and to replace them with renewable

⁴ Mills, Jennifer (November 27 2007). "Divers Who Jump in to Take the Mystery Out of City Waterways." <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/27/nyregion/27divers.html>. Accessed 9 Jul. 2020.

⁵ <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/executive-orders/2020/eo-52.pdf>

⁶ "New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act" <https://climate.ny.gov/>. Accessed 9 Jul. 2020.

energy infrastructure, battery storage, and energy efficiency measures that will support the New York state workforce, economy, and climate goals.

Sincerely,

New York City Council

Brad Lander, New York City Councilmember, District 39
Carlos Menchaca, New York City Councilmember, District 38
Laurie Cumbo, New York City Councilmember & Majority Leader, District 35
Carlina Rivera, New York City Councilmember, District 2
Jimmy Van Bramer, New York City Councilmember, District 26
Antonio Reynoso, New York City Councilmember, District 34
Robert Cornegy, New York City Councilmember, District 36
Ben Kallos, New York City Councilmember, District 5
Helen Rosenthal, New York City Councilmember, District 6
Daniel Dromm, New York City Councilmember, District 25
Inez Barron, New York City Councilmember, District 42
Diana Ayala, New York City Councilmember, District 8
Stephen Levin, New York City Councilmember, District 33
Farah Louis, New York City Councilmember, District 45
Costa Constantinides, Former New York City Councilmember & Chair of
Committee on Environmental Protection, District 22

Brooklyn Borough President

Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough President

New York City Public Advocate

Jumaane Williams, New York City Public Advocate

New York State Senate

Jabari Brisport, New York State Senator, District 25
Andrew Gounardes, New York State Senator, District 22
Alessandra Biaggi, New York State Senator, District 34
Liz Krueger, New York State Senator, District 28
Michael Gianaris, New York State Senator, District 12
Julia Salazar, New York State Senator, District 18
Gustavo Rivera, New York State Senator, District 33
Toby Stavisky, New York State Senator, District 16

New York State Assembly

Marcela Mitaynes, New York State Assemblymember, District 51
Jo Anne Simon, New York State Assemblymember, District 52
Latrice Walker, New York State Assemblymember, District 55
Karines Reyes, New York State Assemblymember, District 87
Harvey Epstein, New York State Assemblymember, District 74
Inez Dickens, New York State Assemblymember, District 70
Jeffrey Dinowitz, New York State Assemblymember, District 81
Linda Rosenthal, New York State Assemblymember, District 67
Robert Carroll, New York State Assemblymember, District 44
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Chantel Jackson, New York State Assemblymember, District 79
William Colton, New York State Assemblymember, District 47
Phara Forrest, New York State Assemblymember, District 57
Gary Pretlow, New York State Assemblymember, District 89
Anna Kelles, New York State Assemblymember, District 125