

NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS  
EDUCATION FUND



# 2010 NEW YORK STATE POLICY AGENDA

10 STEPS TO IMPROVE  
NEW YORK'S ECONOMY  
AND ENVIRONMENT

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# ABOUT THE NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND

The New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (NYLCVEF) engages and educates New Yorkers on environmental issues and the environmental decision-making processes at the local, regional, state and federal government levels. NYLCVEF fosters open, nonpartisan discussion on environmental policy and empowers New Yorkers to be effective advocates for the environment.

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# *Creative Solutions Will Help The Environment And Economy*

As a new decade dawns, New York State is facing challenges not seen for generations. But that does not mean the state should retreat from its environmental goals or sacrifice long-term initiatives to deal with short-term problems.

We present this 2010 New York State Policy Agenda to focus the discussion on creative solutions that will help restore New York's reputation as an environmental leader. These are not blue-sky recommendations, but rather specific and discrete steps that will advance sustainability and cost little or nothing to implement.

2010 has the potential to be a precedent-setting year, where environmental challenges are met fully and honestly with plans that will clean our air and water, reduce fiscal strains on families, businesses and governments, and even employ New Yorkers in doing this vital work. We hope this plan will help lawmakers identify the important battles to be fought, while providing all New Yorkers a clear description of what challenges we face, and demonstrating how feasible appropriate and comprehensive solutions really are.



**NYLCVEF President  
Marcia Bystryn**

## BUILD THE FOUNDATION FOR A CLEAN-ENERGY FUTURE

### 1) Maintain the integrity of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

- Auction proceeds are intended for investment in renewable and energy efficiency. They should be used for that purpose and not diverted to the general fund.

### 2) Compel New York State to Lead by Example

- Pass the Global Warming Pollution Cap, which would direct the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to develop programs that would reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050, unless new information shows that different levels are acceptable.
- Pass legislation requiring the Governor's Office to regularly publish data on the state's progress toward a clean-energy future.
- Pass legislation requiring No. 2 heating oil to meet the same refining standards the federal government currently mandates for diesel oil used in on-road vehicles.

### 3) Enhance Energy Efficiency

- Update the State Energy Code.

### 4) Encourage Development and utilization of Renewables

- Pass legislation to fix New York's net-metering law by restoring the original intent of the legislation to allow all customers the ability to net meter appropriately sized installations up to 2MW.
- Pass legislation authorizing local governments throughout the state to establish property tax credits for the installation of solar heating systems.
- Identify areas of potential for solar power and establish Solar Empowerment Zones in these areas.
- Require newly constructed large flat-roofed structures over 50,000 square feet to install solar systems, if technically feasible.
- Expand the products that municipalities may purchase for public use to include renewable energy sources and set the cost premium percentage for renewable energy products deemed reasonably competitive at 15 percent.

### 5) Ensure development of necessary infrastructure

- Develop a statewide fuel-neutral power plant siting bill that prioritizes renewable energy.
- Pass legislation requiring the development of a comprehensive transmission infrastructure improvement plan (and cost allocation mechanisms) that would map out a feasible scheme for improving transmission systems in the state. Work with other states in the development of a regional plan.

## SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### 6) Establish sustainable development as a state priority

- Pass the Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act, which would require state agencies and authorities to fund infrastructure in a manner consistent with smart-growth principles
- Ensure continued and robust funding for the Environmental Protection Fund so that critical projects and staffing levels are maintained to adequately protect and preserve natural resources.

### 7) Brownfield Restoration

In 2008, the Legislature adopted a brownfield reform package. While the legislation addressed a number of critical issues, important concerns remain. The legislature should:

- Delegate authority to New York City to manage its own streamlined brownfield remediation program.
- Add specific language that would make sites contaminated by historic fill eligible for brownfield tax credits.
- Add bonuses for developments that conform to smart-growth principles.
- Establish a voluntary program by decoupling eligibility for brownfield tax credits from eligibility for DEC oversight and liability release.
- Pass legislation to enhance the Brownfield Opportunity Area program, including increasing the BOA Tax Credit program to a meaningful level.

### 8) Open Space Preservation

- Pass legislation that would amend the 2006 Conservation Easement Tax Credit to allow landowners in villages and cities to claim credit for property taxes paid on land protected by a conservation easement, not just town, county and school properties.
- Pass the Water Quality Protection and Community Enhancement bill in order to strengthen the Adirondack Park Agency Act. This bill will increase environmental protections in the park, including shoreline setbacks, stream buffers and other water and land-use issues.

### 9) Natural Resource Protection

- Water Withdrawal
  - ✓ Require DEC to develop and implement a quantitative instream standard that accurately defines the allowable degree of flow alteration of the state's rivers and streams.
  - ✓ DEC should be given more authority to regulate water withdrawals.
- Pass legislation and ensure adequate funding to address aggressive terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.
- Create solid waste infrastructure, such as an environmentally responsible strategy to manage e-waste.
- Maintain appropriate DEC staffing levels to ensure timely and thorough scientific reviews and responsible management of complex projects.

### 10) Mass Transit

- Pass legislation to allow camera systems to monitor bus rapid transit (BRT) routes in New York City.
- Pass Complete Streets legislation that would require complete streets policies as part of city and county general plans so that roadways are designed to safely accommodate all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, children, older people and disabled people, as well as motorists.
- Strengthen and improve the Transit Oriented Development Program.



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