



Environmental Justice Working Group

psc-cuny.org/environmental-justice-committee



October 2020 Bulletin of the EJWG

PSC Colleagues:

While many PSC members are engaged in ensuring a Biden victory in the November election, (please remember to vote for candidates on the New York Working Families Party line), our EJWG also remains focused on the world that we will still inhabit on January 21. Please consider joining our Group and add your labor to ours so we can continue to make progress in ensuring environmental justice and mitigating Climate Change.

What follows is a brief description of our members September efforts.

Public Ownership of Power Production

At our EJWG September 21 meeting, Professor Ashley Dawson, (College of Staten Island) reviewed the history and current movements for public power ownership and emphasized that the NY campaign is very exciting and everyone should be involved. Public Power organizer Jake Head, a graduate student at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, reported that state legislation is nearing completion for introduction in January, so lobbying efforts with legislators will begin after the Nov. elections. In addition to welcoming volunteers to contact their own legislators and key leaders, the campaign seeks expertise on labor, union, and prevailing wages in legislation. They also plan to work with us on creating a CUNY Roadmap to plan for 100% clean energy on campuses. Contact RossKSPinkerton@gmail.com

Peoples Climate Movement-NY

PCM-NY and 50+ other NYC-based organizations organized a March for Racial and Climate Justice on Sept 20. PSC and NYSNA union members were represented. A Sept. 23 webinar on racial and climate justice was well-attended and powerful. More activities and policy campaigns will be developed immediately after the election. We are connecting with other climate groups--city, state and national--to plan responses. Contact nancyromer@gmail.com for more info.

City-Wide Green Recovery Platform –Climate Works for All

[The Climate Works 4 All Platform](#) would create 100,000 good green jobs in NYC as a central part of the economic, health and racial justice recovery. The platform was successfully launched on Sept. 24. Plans are in the works for a climate "report card" and Town Hall meetings for prospective 2021 NYC candidates for City Council, Controller, Public Advocate and Mayor. We will ask all candidates to endorse specific Climate proposals. Contact nancyromer@gmail.com for more info.

Plastic Pollution

Our representatives attend the Sept 24 meeting of Beyond Plastics. Founder Judith Enck reported that NJ legislators had approved the nation's first ban on both plastic and paper bags. It also includes a ban on polystyrene containers and requires food establishments to provide plastic straws only on request. The law would go into effect in eighteen months if signed. If you live in New Jersey, please contact **Gov. Phil Murphy** by phone or e-mail and urge him to sign the bill. His phone number 609-292-6000 and his

e-mail address can be found [here](#).

If you live in NYC, call NYC Council Speaker Johnson and urge him to bring to the floor a vote on the Ban Plastics Straw bill (intro 936).

Three New York City Congress members have not yet signed on to [Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act](#): **Max Rose, Hakim Jeffries, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortes**. If you are a constituent, please contact your representative and urge them to support this groundbreaking legislation. Brian Langloss of Oceana is organizing Zoom meetings between these Congress members and their constituents. Brian has requested that anyone interested in participating should please submit the form linked [here](#). Contact Marcia Newfield, revolu@earthlink.net

Calls to **Gov. Cuomo** are urged to pressure him to sign a bill banning an incinerator in Cohoes NY.

For additional information or to join their efforts in eliminating plastic pollution, contact:

janselo2000@yahoo.com or Cecelia McCall at liann.mccall@gmail.com

Kingsborough Urban Farm

The fight to save the Kingsborough Community College (KCC) Urban Farm is part of the broader Free CUNY movement. The farm contributes to the alleviation of food insecurity which effects approximately 48% of KCC students. Advocates' goals include: Guaranteed paid employment for staff throughout the 2020-2021 year; employment of work/study and student aides each semester; guarantees needed for a safe work environment and inclusion of the farm in a 5 year priority plan that is currently under consideration. The range of support needed to achieve these outcomes include: art work, time, money, and social media outreach. Organizing meetings as held virtually on Friday afternoons. Students, faculty and community members are invited to attend. Website [here](#); Instagram: @free CUNY, Twitter: @CUNY_free. Please contact Uda Bradford (munroebradford@gmail.com) for additional information.

Divest NY State Public Pension Funds from Fossil Fuels

The EJWG works with [DivestNY](#) to get the State to divest from public pensions its over \$14B holdings in fossil fuels. Negotiations with NY State Comptroller **DiNapoli** on divestment is advancing. We are close to majorities in both the Senate and Assembly to require this divestment. We are particularly hopeful that the new class of state legislators will be adding a more progressive voice in January. We'll hold a press conference on divestment with our legislators after the Nov. elections. We are working with NYSUT members throughout the state so if you know people in other AFT/NYSUT locals and want to help out, please contact nancyromer@gmail.com for more info.

Ron Spalter, Editor