The Climate and Resilience Education Task Force (CRETF), managed by the National Wildlife Federation and WE ACT for Environmental Justice, and with a body of 68 individual adult and organizational members and 35 high school student members of a Youth Steering Committee, works to expand access to interdisciplinary P-12 climate education across New York State.

New York State has been a leader in response to the climate crisis in many ways. The 2019 Climate Leadership and Communities Protection Act (CLCPA) is one of the most ambitious climate laws in the country, committing the State to 100% zero-emission electricity by 2040, and a reduction of at least 85% below 1990-level GHG emissions by 2050. In December, 2022 the Climate Action Council approved a Final Scoping Plan for the implementation of the CLCPA, which outlines many of the important steps needed to reach the State's ambitious goals.

The Scoping Plan explicitly recognizes "the need for P-12 curricula to include climate change education," as well as "a coordinated effort on outreach and education across all sectors of the economy," (p.427).

It is time for New York to become a climate education and green workforce development leader. Other states such as California, Washington, Connecticut, Maine, and New Jersey have taken steps of various degrees to include environmental and climate change education in their P-12 schools. New Jersey is the only state to integrate climate education into its learning standards across all grades and 7 content areas. However, New York has the unique opportunity to become a national leader and global leader by bridging various state-level priorities outlined in the Scoping Plan with comprehensive, interdisciplinary P-12 climate education. These areas include supporting a just and equitable transition for New York's existing and emerging workforce, climate justice, and enhancing community resilience.

In order to fulfill the aggressive and essential goals put forth in the CLCPA at the scale that is required across all sectors, it is critical for New York State to build a culture of preparedness by educating its young citizens about the scientific, social, cultural, economic, and political implications of the climate crisis and the disproportionate effects of the crisis on New York’s environmental justice and Indigenous communities. Climate education must not be an afterthought, but an integral part of New York State’s policy agendas and budgets in FY23 and beyond. Putting New York on a path toward carbon neutrality will only be possible if its students, workers, and communities are given the necessary tools to participate in a just transition.
In order for New York to become a climate education leader, we urge the Governor, State Legislature, and Board of Regents to carry out the following initiatives:

**Funding**
Allocate funds in the state education budget specifically for P-12 climate education.

**Learning Standards**
Require all P-12 public school students to learn about climate change across all grade levels and content areas.

**Resources**
Create a resource hub for NY State teachers using existing P-12 interdisciplinary climate education curricula.

**Professional Learning**
Support and adequately fund long-term professional development programs.

**Pre-Service Certification for Teachers**
Require that all colleges of education incorporate environmental justice and climate change concepts into methods courses in all certification areas.

**Mental Health Support**
Ensure P-12 schools are prepared to support the emotional health of students, teachers, and other educators.

**CTE & Workforce Development**
Create a plan to establish new, and invest in existing, workforce development programs that create a pathway from P-12 schools to the green jobs required to decarbonize New York's economy.

**A Task Force for Coordination**
Establish a Task Force to gather feedback from stakeholders.

**Office of Climate Education & Workforce Development**
Create an Office of Climate Education and Workforce Development.

The Climate and Resilience Education Task Force (CRETF), managed by the National Wildlife Federation and WE ACT for Environmental Justice, and with a body of 68 individual adult and organizational members and 40 high school student members of a Youth Steering Committee, works to expand access to interdisciplinary P-12 climate education across New York State.
1. **Funding**

Allocate funds in the state education budget specifically for P-12 climate education.

Distribute funding and resources for climate education at the state-level will enable school districts and partners to implement the below recommendations, which include but are not limited to: preparing teachers with robust professional development, developing a curricular resource hub with state-based curricula, creating CTE and green workforce development programs, supporting student needs, such as mental health, compensating members of a Task Force for coordination, and establishing an Office of Climate Education and Workforce Development.

1.a) Use an equity-focused approach to ensure that the schools and districts with the greatest need receive the necessary financial and logistical support for climate change education implementation. Further, the disproportionate effects of climate change seen by communities of color, immigrant communities and low-income communities must be highlighted in curricular materials, teacher professional learning modules, and communications (consistent with language from the Report on K-12 Climate Change Education Needs in New Jersey).

1.b) Any bills or budget measures introduced must have a robust funding mechanism.

2. **Learning Standards**

Require all P-12 public school students to learn about climate change across all grade levels and content areas.

2.a) Expeditiously revise New York State learning standards to reflect the urgency of the crisis; the standards must include the causes and impacts of anthropogenic climate change, equitable solutions and innovations, and the study of how other nations are confronting climate change.

2.b) Adapt both STEM and humanities courses to demonstrate the implications and reality of a zero-carbon society.

2.c) Integrate student and other stakeholder perspectives and input into new curricular materials.

3. **Resources**

Create a resource hub for NY State teachers using existing P-12 interdisciplinary climate education curricula.

Some of the biggest obstacles for teachers to teach about climate change include time and the lack of easily accessible and ready-made lessons in one place. Following the example of New Jersey's Climate Change Education Hub (njclimateeducation.org), New York State should create a consolidated hub for education curricula, categorized by grade level and content area containing exemplar lesson plans, up-to-date professional learning opportunities, and other teacher resources.

3.a) Frontline communities will experience the first and worst impacts of the climate crisis; as such, curricular resources should incorporate NY State-specific lessons as well as globally-focused lessons with a justice-centered framework.
4. **Professional Learning**

Such professional learning programs should engage P-12 teachers across all subject areas in learning about climate, energy and environmental justice. Climate change education professional learning must leverage a teacher-led framework and student-centered classroom pedagogy.

4.a) Teachers should be supported to demonstrate connections between academic subjects.
4.b) Establish both a timeline for professional learning and educator readiness in accordance with New York State’s decarbonization goals, and a plan for ongoing teacher support, peer exchange, and evaluation.
4.c) Create school-based green jobs for experienced educators to assist with coordinating in-school teacher professional learning, and managing interdisciplinary place based climate education.
4.d) Establish a SUNY and/or CUNY-wide micro-credential that leverages existing courses across schools and degree programs.
4.e) Require a designated number of professional development hours/Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) in climate education for all in-service teachers. Coordinate such training with aforementioned educational partners.

5. **Pre-Service Certification for Teachers**

This should include linkages to Indigenous knowledge and understandings as key to solving climate change. Environmental and climate change content knowledge should also be included on all state tests for teacher certification, and all colleges should mandate that teacher candidates take two courses in environmental studies/climate change as part of their certification package.

6. **Mental Health Support**

Curricular resources should use a social and emotional learning (SEL) framework when discussing the climate crisis and environmental injustice. Climate education must be honest and engage learners in climate action and solutions to reduce climate anxiety and other challenging emotions.

6.a) Integrate counseling for students and climate anxiety-related professional learning workshops for teachers.
6.b) Incorporate place-based learning that brings learners into nature and fosters stewardship.
The purpose of such a Task Force is to determine an appropriate plan for carrying out the above recommendations. The Task Force will work to identify needs related to climate education, CTE, and workforce development in New York, and prepare a report with their findings.

8.a) Conduct a gap analysis to determine needs and opportunities in the P-12 education, CTE, and workforce development sectors that are necessary to provide New York’s students with a modern climate education.

8.b) Engage stakeholders including but not limited to: the Board of Regents, NYSED, higher education partners, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), labor and community-based organizations, environmental justice and climate justice organizations, cultural institutions such as museums, zoos and aquariums, and green workforce development and private sector partners.

7 Commit to establishing Career and Technical Education (CTE) and workforce development programs focused on climate solutions in sectors within a just transition framework including but not limited to: renewable energy, transportation and food systems, building design, forestry, and waste.

7.a) Implement a strategy to recruit, train, and skill up the clean energy workforce required to decarbonize key sectors of New York’s economy. These efforts should prioritize BIPOC and lower-income communities.

A Task Force for Coordination

Establish a Task Force to gather feedback from stakeholders.

The purpose of such a Task Force is to determine an appropriate plan for carrying out the above recommendations. The Task Force will work to identify needs related to climate education, CTE, and workforce development in New York, and prepare a report with their findings.

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Office of Climate Education & Workforce Development

Create an Office of Climate Education and Workforce Development.

After the recommended Task Force convenes and identifies needs related to climate education and workforce development at the state level, a permanent Office will ensure that there is consistent oversight and management of climate education and workforce development programs. The Office should undertake activities including but not limited to: analyzing data from gap analyses and surveys, examining trends, developing budgets, and evaluating best practices.

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