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On the ground – and at the table

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New Report Shows Over 50% of NYCHA Residents are in Highest Heat Risk Neighborhoods

“NYC Climate Justice Agenda 2018” Highlights Climate Risks and Strategies for Resiliency and Equity for NYC’s Low-Income Neighborhoods and Communities of Color

New York, NY – Only months after hundreds-of-thousands of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents shivered through a frigid winter without heat and hot water, a new report from the [New York City Environmental Justice Alliance \(NYC-EJA\)](#) now highlights a new risk: extreme heat.

The report, “[NYC Climate Justice Agenda 2018 – Midway to 2030: Building Resiliency and Equity for a Just Transition](#),” shows for the first time that more than 50% of NYCHA residents live in the city’s highest heat risk neighborhoods, based on information from the official [NYC Heat Vulnerability Index](#). Given the significant heat vulnerability of NYCHA residents, and the fact that more Americans die from heat waves every year than all other extreme weather events combined, the report argues NYCHA must act now to develop and share community preparedness plans for extreme heat events before summer’s onslaught begins.

“[NYC Climate Justice Agenda 2018 – Midway to 2030: Building Resiliency and Equity for a Just Transition](#),” released today by NYC-EJA, focuses on four key areas of government action and policy: 1) Extreme Heat and Community Preparedness; 2) Air Quality; 3) Green Infrastructure Equity; and 4) Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.

“We freeze in winter; we boil in summer. No matter the season or the weather, working class communities of color are on the front line of climate change, said Eddie Bautista, Executive Director,

New York City Environmental Justice Alliance. "Tomorrow is today; we cannot deny the 'fierce urgency of now' regarding climate change in our communities."

"Central Brooklyn is one of the most heat-vulnerable areas of New York City, made worse by a lack of green space and energy efficient buildings. The NYC Climate Justice Agenda highlights the profound need to incorporate community priorities, expand access to energy efficiency and renewable energy, and maximize opportunities for new green infrastructure investments to improve the health and wellbeing of our community," said Mark Winston Griffith, Executive Director of the Brooklyn Movement Center.

"GOLES has long partnered with NYCHA tenants associations around community preparedness and resiliency. Given the high heat vulnerability of public housing residents, and the risks of storm surge and other climate impacts in the Lower East Side, we are glad to see the NYC Climate Justice Agenda uplift our call for stronger preparedness initiatives for NYCHA," said Damaris Reyes, Executive Director of GOLES

Among the dozens of recommendations [in the report](#):

- NYC's Office of Emergency Management should release cooling center locations before heat emergencies and provide consistent hours so communities can adequately prepare.
- NYC's Parks Department should strategically increase street trees, parks and open spaces for heat vulnerable neighborhoods to mitigate impacts of the urban heat island effect, and NYCHA should conduct a tree census on all their properties similar to the data currently collected elsewhere by the Parks Department.
- NYS's Department of Environmental Conservation should utilize a portion of the \$127 million Volkswagen Settlement to purchase electric buses, thereby helping the MTA convert its entire bus fleet from diesel to electric in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, respiratory illness associated with pollution, and achieve long-term savings.
- The City should establish exclusive commercial waste zones that require the highest diversion, environmental, and labor standards for private waste carters, and require that private waste transfer stations abide by the same standards.
- The City and State should identify and designate larger solar-ready public roofs, such as bus depots and wastewater treatment plants, for Community Shared Solar projects with equitable targets for low-to-moderate income subscriptions, workforce development, and community ownership.

About the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA)

Founded in 1991, the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA) is a non-profit, 501(c)3 citywide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income neighborhoods and

communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA empowers its member organizations to advocate for improved environmental conditions and against inequitable environmental burdens through the coordination of campaigns designed to inform City and State policies. Through our efforts, member organizations coalesce around specific common issues that threaten the ability for low-income communities of color to thrive.

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