

Executive Summary

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) most recent report (Feb 2022) states that the science is unequivocal - climate change is a grave threat to the health of people and planet - requiring ambitious, accelerated, and local climate action. In New York, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) calls for greenhouse gas emissions reductions of 40% by 2030, electrical grid decarbonization by 2040, and a net-zero economy by 2050, with 30-40% of the benefits of investment going to environmental justice communities. Transitioning the Genesee-Finger Lakes away from fossil fuels swiftly and equitably will necessitate the coordination, commitment, leadership, and investment of a broad range of stakeholders. While the CLCPA has clear targets, it does not, as of yet, provide clear guidance for implementation or tracking progress. As such, the Genesee-FLX Climate Action Strategy provides a framework for collaborative action for the next 3-5 years that 1) focuses on key enablers of systems-level change, 2) utilizes already existing technologies, 3) optimizes the co-benefits of taking climate action, and 4) provides the chance for everyone to meaningfully contribute.

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Our analysis shows that regional greenhouse gas emissions come largely from transportation (33%), agricultural sector (22%), and residential and commercial buildings (25%). Furthermore, decarbonizing and improving our electrical grid will provide year-over-year gains in emissions reductions as we move to electrify other sectors. Accordingly, the Genesee-FLX Climate Action Strategy focuses



on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation, buildings, agriculture, and energy generation sectors, while advancing equity, public health, economic development, and ecological stewardship for the benefit of all regional residents.

Given the interdependence of our natural, social, and economic systems, particularly with regard to our transportation and electricity infrastructure and our local food-system, regional action provides the most strategic way forward. A regional approach is large enough to have a meaningful impact on the state's overall emissions, while small enough to engage local actors in making a positive impact in their community. The intention here is to integrate existing efforts into a comprehensive framework for collaborative action that advances the good work already underway and provides direction for those yet to undertake climate or sustainability initiatives.

While climate change poses significant challenges, it also offers significant opportunities to reimagine and reinvigorate our region's future. Successfully mitigating and adapting to climate change will require rehabilitating our aging housing stock, reconceptualizing our transportation system, modernizing the energy grid, and creating a sustainable food supply. It also provides the chance to reduce the

energy burden of low-income households, improve indoor and outdoor air quality, create living-wage jobs, and facilitate cooperation between members of our diverse community. These actions stimulate our local economy and make our neighborhoods cleaner, stronger, healthier, and more resilient. According to an analysis by NY Climate Action Council, achieving CLCPA goals will save approximately \$260 billion by reducing the damages associated with climate change. Moreover, improvements in air quality, increased active transportation, and energy efficiency interventions will generate \$160-170 billion worth of health benefits. Climate action makes financial sense - in New York State, the cost of inaction exceeds the cost of action by at least \$80 billion.

To ensure the Genesee-Finger Lakes is a leader in the state's transition to a clean energy economy and can reap the economic, environmental, and social benefits associated with climate solutions requires we take coordinated, collaborative action at the regional level now. Accordingly, the Genesee-FLX Climate Collective, with the Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-

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Finger Lakes Region as the backbone organization, is employing the collective impact approach to advance a regional climate action strategy that moves the region forward in meeting CLCPA goals. Collective impact facilitates large-scale, cross-sector collaboration to

address complex, urgent, social issues that cannot be solved within a single sector or by a single entity. The Climate Collective chose this approach because we believe that the only way to thwart the climate crisis is to work collaboratively. Addressing climate change provides the opportunity for every individual, business, organization, and municipality to work together in cultivating the future we want to see for the Genesee-Finger Lakes region.

Because climate change is a structural issue with multiple touchpoints and intersections, the actions selected for this strategy must also multitask, reducing emissions, while addressing other areas of community concern. To accomplish this, the Genesee-FLX Climate Action Strategy moves beyond a singular focus on climate mitigation, adaptation, or resilience, focusing instead on actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute substantially to improving quality of life, adaptability, and resilience of individuals and communities to the climate impacts we already experience and those to come. The Genesee-FLX Climate Action Strategy prioritizes climate action that

addresses 1) vehicle miles traveled (VMT) 2) energy efficiency, 3) building electrification, 4) soil health and agricultural waste management, 5) the local food system, 6) the electrical grid, and 7) economy-wide greenhouse gas reducing measures.

The power of this strategy lies in the many committed individuals engaged daily in service to others and to the community. Consequently, this is an emergent strategy, one that can, and will, evolve as we continue to engage stakeholders, learn from one another, and build the capacity of our community to take climate action. Therefore, we offer the following strategy in the spirit of collaboration, and with the promise of possibility, expecting that local communities adapt the strategy to fit their needs, while seeking regional synergies and opportunities to share resources and best practices that advance the state's goal of a net-zero economy. *Together, WE are the solution to climate change.*