

League of Conservation Voters 2010 Environmental Questionnaire for New York Statewide Candidates

PERSONAL INITIATIVES and vision

1. Please share with us accomplishments or experiences that indicate your commitment to advancing an agenda for New York State that promotes environmental protection, sustainable development and a clean-energy future. These may be professional or personal.

I have been an environmental activist since organizing the teach-in and writing the issues handbook for for the first Earth Day in 1970 at my high school in California. I was active in the anti-nuclear movement in the 1970s and 1980s with the People's Energy Project and then the Clamshell Alliance in New Hampshire and the Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance and the Green Mountain Alliance in Vermont. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, I was a co-founder and member of a worker cooperative that did energy audits and green building retrofits for efficiency and wind and solar applications. I was a co-founder of the Green Party in the United States in 1984.

My involvement in the movement to stop solid waste incinerators spanned my last years in New England and my first years in Syracuse, to where I moved in 1991. In Syracuse I have been active in groups promoting biological waste treatment and green infrastructure to absorb rainwater in the court-ordered clean-up and restoration of Onondaga Lake and Onondaga Creek.

I have remained active in anti-nuclear/safe energy movement. As a Green Party candidate for Syracuse Mayor in 2005, my advocacy of public power garnered broad support, the formation of the Public Power Coalition of Central New York, and the funding of a public power feasibility study by the city. We see public power as the way to empower our city to invest in conservation, efficiency, and renewable generation of electricity, heating, and cooling as well as reduce energy costs.

My Green Party campaigns for city council and mayor have emphasized sustainable development policies and succeeded in putting them into the ongoing policy dialogue. Nearly all candidates of all parties in the city now support sustainable development in word if not as much in deed as Greens would like.

2. How do you propose to restore New York State's historic role as a national environmental leader?

Enact a set of reforms – a Green New Deal – that creates a full employment, sustainable green economy based on carbon-free renewable energy, mass transit, clean manufacturing, organic agriculture, and walkable, mixed-use communities.

Among the leading polices and programs of the Green New Deal are:

- Carbon-Free Renewable Energy – A 100% carbon emissions reduction in 10 years – a carbon-free economy by 2020 – that sets an example for the nation and the world for what must be done by industrial economies to avert climate catastrophe. My answers to question below will detail how

this can be done across economic sectors.

- Progressive Tax Reforms that will enable the state to fully fund its environmental and energy programs. These would include retaining, not rebating, the Stock Transfer Tax (\$16 billion revenues in 2009), a 50% Bankers Bonus Tax on banker's cash bonuses (\$10 billion revenues in 2009), and restoring the Progressive Personal Income Tax structure that prevailed in 1972 (\$8 billion additional revenue, while 95% of New Yorkers would pay lower effective rates). Subtract the \$9 billion deficit New York faced going into 2010 and will again in 2011, and that leaves \$25 billion for social and environmental spending the state needs for a sustainable green economic recovery needed to fund environmental programs going forward.
- Eco-Taxes that create incentives for a sustainable green economy. Start with carbon taxes and higher gasoline taxes with progressive refundable tax credits of a portion of the revenues to protect low and moderate income people.
- Environmental Protection Fund – With the increased revenues from progressive and eco-taxes, restore the \$500 million raided from the Environmental Protection Fund in recent years and stop redirecting revenues from the Real Estate Transfer Tax that are supposed to be dedicated to the EPF into the general fund to close deficits.
- Department of Environmental Conservation – Fully fund the Department of Environmental Conservation and end regulatory capture by appointing where needed new staff committed to environmental protection.
- Sustainable Organic Agriculture – Make a major commitment to promoting sustainable organic agriculture in New York State to provide, without polluting our valuable water resources, quality food and the material feedstocks for industry to replace the nonrenewable, climate altering hydrocarbon economy with a renewable, clean carbohydrate economy where materials are recyclable or biodegradable.

3. Given the state's fiscal condition, how do programs for the protection of natural resources (EPF), revitalization of transportation (MTA) and investment in clean energy (RGGI) rate with the rest of your agenda? For each of these areas, please define the level at which you believe funding would be adequate and identify for us a funding stream that you support and believe can withstand raids and offloads.

Environmental Protection Fund:

When the state rebates \$16 billion in 2009 to Wall Street speculators from the Stock Transfer Tax, there is no excuse for raiding an already depleted fund for environmental capital projects. Over \$500 million has been taken from this fund to fill budget gaps, including about \$100 million this year and \$220 million the year before. I support progressive tax reforms to cover the state's operating budget. These reforms will also generate sufficient revenues to repay the over \$500 million taken from the Environmental Protection Fund.

These tax reforms include keeping the Stock Transfer Tax (\$16 billion), a 50% Banker's Bonus Tax (\$10 billion for 2009), and restoration of the more progressive personal income tax structure that obtained in New York before 1972 (\$8 billion more in revenue while cutting state income tax rates for 95% of New Yorkers). The Real Estate Transfer Tax should continue to be dedicated to the Environmental Protection Fund.

See my news release on these issues: <http://www.howiehawkins.com/2010/media-releases/46-hawkins-slams-paterson-for-raiding-environmental-fund.html>.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority:

As immediate measures I support the following legislation to maintain operating budgets, service levels, and transit employment:

- The state MTA Stimulus bill (S7433/A10345), introduced by Senator Perkins and Assembly Member Millman, which would direct the MTA to use 10% of over \$1.3 billion in stimulus grants for capital projects received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).
- The federal Transit Flex spending bill (HR2746, Carnahan & Matsui/S3189, Brown), which would allow New York City to spend up to 30% of its capital funds for operating expenses.
- The Public Transportation Preservation Act (S3412), introduced by eight senators, which would deliver \$2 billion in emergency funding to transit systems nationwide, including over \$350 million in operating funds for the New York City metropolitan area.

Beyond this immediate relief, the MTA needs a dedicated funding for operating expenses and a fully-funded capital plan. The riders need the service reliability and enhancement it provides. Workers need the construction and transit jobs.

We need a new funding source for transit in New York City. I support the congestion pricing plan developed by Ted Kheel and Charlie Komanoff to raise \$1.5 billion a year for the MTA while reducing or eliminating fares and increasing ridership. (See http://www.nnyn.org/kheelplan/kheel_komanoff_plan.html)

We also need increased, long-term dedicated transit funding from the federal government from gasoline and carbon taxes.

For federal transportation funding, the US tax on gasoline has been reduced to \$19 per 1000 miles driven, half of what it was in 1975 and the lowest it has ever been since the tax was instituted in 1929 in inflation-adjusted dollars. For immediate increased funding, the federal gas tax, which is dedicated to transportation funding, should be raised. More of it should be spent on expanding mass transit and pedestrian and bicycle enhancements of roads, instead of roads and highways dedicated strictly to cars and trucks. Pending a federal gas tax increase, New York should increase its gasoline tax to help fund mass transit and highway maintenance.

I will discuss carbon taxes below in discussing RGGI.

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative:

I support replacing the RGGI cap-and-trade system with a carbon tax whose revenues would be divided between consumer rebates in the form of a progressively structured refundable tax credit and public sector clean energy investments.

Cap-and-trade schemes like RGGI simply cannot achieve emissions reductions large enough or fast enough to avert climate catastrophe. The price signal is too vague and volatile to incentivize massive investments in carbon-free energy. The revenues generated are too small to cover the needed investments through the public sector.

RGGI is too limited. Only electric generation is covered, leaving 60% of carbon emissions unaffected. RGGI is too slow, starting with the 6 year freeze on the cap before it begins to lower when we only have a decade to radical carbon reductions according to climate scientists.

RGGI is politically vulnerable. When carbon permits and thus electric rates spike when the economy recovers, the burdens on already stretched working families, businesses with substantial electric usage, and power producers will put pressures on politicians to raise the cap or issue free permits, as Gov. Paterson proposed in 2009 for power producers with long term contracts with utilities. When the economy and tax revenues are down, RGGI funds intended for clean energy investment can be raided to fill budget gaps, as New York and several other RGGI states have done in the last two years.

Cap-and-trade is Wall Street's carbon pricing solution. It opens up a huge market of trillions of dollars in which Wall Street will make money off of fees, commissions, and derivatives, money that could go to consumer rebates and clean energy investments. The European carbon market experience shows how cap-and-trade creates volatile carbon prices that make planning investments in energy conservation, efficiency, and renewables highly risky and uncertain.

A better and more equitable solution is the carbon tax. It would tax fuels based on their carbon content. One portion of the revenues would be rebated to consumers, with another portion of the revenues dedicated to public investments in the efficient use of clean renewable energy, including mass transit as well as the clean generation of electricity, heating, and cooling. The tax would be escalated gradually on a known schedule, giving businesses and households predictable prices for planning investments in energy conservation, efficiency, and renewables that pay for themselves over known time periods. Ideally a carbon tax should be harmonized internationally. Next best would be a federal carbon tax. In the meantime, New York State should implement a carbon tax, as British Columbia has done and raised far more revenue than New York has from RGGI while shielding low income people from its impact through the B.C. Low Income Climate Action Tax Credit, a refundable tax credit funded by the carbon tax.

Climate and Energy:

4. What steps will your office take to address climate change and expand New York's clean energy economy?

I would immediately issue an executive order to update and radically strengthen the state's greenhouse gas emissions goal and its Climate Action Plan to reflect what climate science now says we need to do to avert catastrophic climate change: reduce state's net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2020 – a carbon-free economy in 10 years.

Gov. Paterson's 2009 Executive Order No. 24 goal of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 utterly too

late and too little to avert catastrophic climate change. The US federal goals in the Copenhagen Accord announced in January 2010 to reduce carbon emissions below 2005 levels by 30% in 2025, 42% in 2030, and 83% by 2050 are just as inadequate. Climate science tells us these Copenhagen Accord goals set the planet on the path that will emit enough carbon by 2050 to raise global temperatures 3.9°C and make climate catastrophe inevitable. These slow, incremental goals for mitigating climate change are driven by the politics of pandering to the vested interests of the powerful incumbent industries that produce and use fossil fuels, not by the objective dictates of climate science about what is necessary to avert climate catastrophe. These state and federal goals would take us well passed the global warming “tipping points “ and their catastrophic effects before substantial greenhouse gas reductions were implemented.

New York should set an example by committing to build a carbon-free economy on a 10 year timeline. That example will hopefully demonstrate the practicality and inspire imitation by other states, the federal government, and other national governments. It is what New York must do to counter the corporate and governmental vested interests and inertia taking us toward climate disaster.

As discussed below, the science shows it is both necessary and feasible to create a zero-carbon economy in 10 years in an industrialized state like New York with concerted planning across all economic sectors, including Electric Generation, Transport, Building Efficiency, Industrial Processes, Agriculture, and Land Use.

Clear elements of a NY Climate Action Plan designed build a zero-carbon economy in 10 years would include:

- A permanent ban on horizontal hydrofracking for natural gas.
- A rapid phase-out of coal fired electricity generation.
- A rapid phase out of nuclear power.
- A rapid phase out of solid waste incineration.
- A carbon tax to progressively raise the cost of using carbon, with the revenues devoted to a progressively graduated refundable tax credit to protect low and moderate income consumers and to public investments to support the Climate Action Plan.
- A rapid phase-in electric generation from wind, solar, and biofuel sources, with smart grid improvements to facilitate decentralized production and storage.
- Retrofitting homes and buildings with ground-source heat pumps for heating and cooling.
- Expanding, rebuilding, and electrifying urban mass transit systems, freight rail systems, and interurban rail systems.
- Scaling up the Green Jobs / Green Homes program for green retrofitting of 1 million residences in five years to retrofit all 7 million NY residences in 10 years.
- Policies that support regionalized sustainable organic agriculture.
- Policies that support clean, zero-waste manufacturing and solid waste management.
- Land use planning at a regional/metropolitan level to support compact, mixed-use, walkable communities.

Climate science is reporting faster global warming than the findings of the 4th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2007, the UN body whose scientific reports and recommendations have been conservative because the world's governments must approve their

contents. The IPCC said that by 2020 rich industrial countries must cut emissions 25 to 40 percent (compared with 1990) if the world is to have a chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change. The IPCC found that to stabilize the carbon parts per million in the atmosphere at between 445 and 490ppm (resulting in an estimated average global temperature 2° to 2.4° C above the pre-industrial level) emissions would need to peak before 2015, with 50 to 85% reductions below 2000 levels by 2050.

By contrast, more recent assessments from James Hansen et al. (“Target Atmospheric CO₂: Where Should Humanity Aim?,” April 2008) and Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in a report for the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU) (“Solving the Climate Dilemma: The Budget Approach,” September 2009, http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu_sn2009_en.html) say we must have much deeper and faster reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to avert catastrophic climate change. These reports say we must reduce carbon ppm to below the 350 by 2050 in order to avert the 2°Celsius (3.6° Fahrenheit) rise in global temperature above the pre-industrial average that is considered the “tipping point” beyond which climate change takes on self-reinforcing momentum we cannot stop. Already the world average temperature has risen 0.8°C above the pre-industrial average and the greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere will raise global average temperatures to 1.3°C above the pre-industrial average. Time is running out.

Many groups and countries have embraced the 2°C target, including the 2005 International Climate Change Taskforce (in its report “Meeting the Climate Challenge”), the European Union (see “EU action against climate change”), more than 200 of the world's leading climate scientists (see the Bali Declaration by Scientists), and the Copenhagen Accord itself, although its carbon emission goals cannot meet the 2°C goal. Developing countries who demanded a 1.5°C goal in Copenhagen (Bolivia demands 1°C) were rebuffed by the developed and oil-producing countries. It is not clear that 1°C to 1.5°C is even technically possible given the greenhouse gases already released and the momentum of the existing energy system. The IPCC 4th Assessment Report indicates, however, that a truly global and massive program of reforestation and soil regeneration could fix atmospheric carbon in biomass enough to reduce its levels over decades, making the 1°C to 1.5°C goal long long term goal. The more powerful measure now is to cut emissions.

2°C is considered the “tipping point” beyond which irreversible and runaway climate change will occur due to self-reinforcing trends that accelerate the release of greenhouse gases and global heating and other adverse changes in ecological systems, including melting permafrost that releases the potent greenhouse gas methane, melting ice masses and sea level rise, abrupt cessation of ocean currents such as the Gulf Stream that warms the northern latitudes of eastern North American and Western Europe, ocean acidification and ocean life die-offs due to carbonic acid from atmospheric carbon dissolving in the ocean, and a dieback of the Amazon rain forest, a major source of atmospheric oxygen (20%) and major sink for atmospheric carbon dioxide. These changes would expand drought regions and change monsoon and other rain patterns to radically disrupt water supplies and food production; reduce genetic, species, and ecosystem biodiversity that sustains all life forms including human; flood densely populated coastal regions; and engender massive environmental refugee migrations and the potential for resource wars.

The WBGU report finds that in order to have a two in three chance of keeping global warming to less than the 2°C (3.6° F) above pre-industrial levels, atmospheric carbon dioxide must be reduced from its current level of 390 ppm (parts per million) into the range of 300 to 350 ppm, which is still 10 to 27 percent above the pre-industrial level of 275-285 ppm.

The WBGU report uses a global energy budget approach to allocate national budgets for carbon dioxide emissions. To reduce atmospheric carbon to below 350 ppm and have a two-thirds chance of averting the tipping points to runaway global warming, the cumulative CO2 emissions budget for the global economy needs to be capped at 750 gigatons (billion tons) through 2050. When this global budget is divided into national CO2 budgets on an equal per-capita basis, the United States only has 6 years at its current emissions rate before it has spent its share of the budget. The WBGU report therefore calls on the United States to begin cutting emissions immediately and expend its carbon budget over ten years as it transitions to a carbon-free economy by 2020.

In July 2008, Al Gore called upon the United States to set a goal of producing 100% of its electricity from carbon-free renewable sources in 10 years. In June 2010, the Zero Carbon Australia Energy Plan was introduced in the Australian Parliament by the Green Deputy Leader, Senator Christine Milne, who called upon the government to act on it findings. The plan published by Melbourne University Energy Institute and Beyond Zero Emissions is the first detailed and peer-reviewed publication to demonstrate that it is technologically and economically feasible to power an industrial country like Australia with 100% with renewable energy in ten years with technology commercially available today. Like the US, the WBGU energy budget calls on Australia to build a carbon-free economy by 2020. New York State's Climate Action Plan should do likewise.

Concerning the economic feasibility of a carbon-free economy in 10 years, we believe it is the best way to create a sustainable green economic recovery. As with any energy infrastructure project, up-front capital costs pay for themselves over time through energy sales to producers. In this renewable energy plan with a strong emphasis on energy conservation and efficiency, the plan will also pay for itself through reduced energy costs to home, business, and government consumers who invest in conservation, efficiency, and renewables.

Furthermore, the massive investment in building a new energy infrastructure is needed to get the economy moving again. Consumers are over-indebted with stagnant wages. Consumer demand is therefore depressed. Business debt is also high and with consumer demand low, business investment is likewise depressed. The \$15 trillion in cash and liquid assets now held by wealthy individuals (\$10 trillion) and the big banks (\$2.7 trillion) and corporations (\$1.8 trillion) is therefore being deployed to speculation that merely rearranges who owns existing productive assets instead of long term investments in new productive assets. The new productive assets we need now are a green energy assets. Building a carbon-free economy by 2020, with strong public sector initiatives and policies to help achieve that goal, will redirect idle savings from speculation into the real economy of production and a sustainable green economic prosperity.

Natural Resources and Restoration

5.What role will your office play to restore already damaged areas in the Great Lakes,

Adirondacks, Catskills and Long Island Sound?

- Promote legislation and regulation to reduce atmospheric mercury emissions which are polluting our waterways.
- Promote legislation and regulation to reduce pesticide and fertilizer runoff from farms, business, and residences into our waterways.
- Fight invasive species such as the Asian Carp, starting with stronger enforcement of ballast water regulations.
- Increase state funding for local government water, sewage, and “green” infrastructure. The green infrastructure initiative of Onondaga County to absorb rain runoff so sewers and treatment plants are not overwhelmed needs to be duplicated across the state.
- Accelerate the clean-up of waterfront superfund and brownfield sites to protect waterways.
- Protect and stop filling coastal wetlands. Not only are wetlands important habitat for marine and bird life, they act as natural sponges to absorb some of the sea level rise and potential coastal flooding we will experience from global warming.
- Ban horizontal hydrofracking for national gas to protect drinking water sources. This may be obvious in the Catskills, the water source for New York City, and the Skaneateles Lake watershed for Syracuse. But the state’s Southern Tier, the Susquehanna and Upper Delaware river basins, as well as the Catskill Mountains, are the source of drinking water for about 14 million New Yorkers and about 9 million Pennsylvanians — more than 5 percent of the US population, including much of upstate New York, New York City and Philadelphia.
- Have the state buy more land in the Adirondacks and Catskills to protect habitat and natural environmental services that sustain the human economy, including scenic values that are a basis for tourism in these areas.
- Fully fund the Adirondack Park Agency and appoint environmentalists to its board.
- Promote sustainable organic agriculture to reduce pesticide and fertilizer pollution of water, including:
 - prioritizing Department of Agriculture spending and technical assistance for organic agriculture and converting farms to organic,
 - using the state's purchasing power to expand markets for local organic products,
 - increasing purchases of conservation easements to protect farmland,
 - favorable property tax treatment of farmland, extending the principle already afforded to forest land, with the state covering the revenue gap for local government,
 - a moratorium on the planting of genetically modified crops.

Sustainable Development

6.How would your office encourage smart growth in NYS, including Brownfield clean ups, transit-oriented development, improved freight and goods movement, and open space preservation?

The key reform to enable effective policies for sustainable development in New York State is to remove land use planning from the town and municipal level to the regional/metropolitan level. With land use and zoning jurisdiction now at the town and municipal level, tax jurisdiction competition for a larger taxable property tax base leads to sprawl development. It discourages smart growth, transit-oriented

development. New greenfield development gets favored over brownfield clean-up and redevelopment using existing infrastructure and over the preservation of open space. It discourages resource and energy efficient compact, mixed-use, walkable communities. A 2003 Brookings Institute study, "Sprawl Without Growth: The Upstate Paradox," found that New York's system of land use planning and zoning made sprawl in upstate New York among the most expansive in the nation.

Moving land use planning authority from local municipalities to elected metropolitan/regional planning boards will enable communities to develop sustainable development plans that both protect local interests and promote sustainable development. It will end the tax-base incentives for destructive sprawl. Regional, democratic land use planning will make sustainable development possible because it will enable regional board to protect farmland, green space, and environmental resources, reduce intraregional inequities in housing, education and fiscal capacity, and renew city, town, and village centers through transit-linked, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods of mixed homes, shops, jobs, schools, parks, and civic buildings. Another policy to encourage would be to promote the redevelopment sites within the existing urban infrastructure network before extending road, water, sewer, and other utility lines to new greenfield development. Establishing urban growth boundaries, as Portland, Oregon has done, would support this policy.

In addition to changing land use planning jurisdiction, the state should enact progressive tax reforms and revenue sharing at the state level in order to reduce tax jurisdiction competition for property tax revenues at the local level. The State Finance Law says the state is supposed to share 8 percent of state revenues with counties and municipalities. But the legislature has annually exempted itself from this requirement in budgets for decades. Higher taxes on the very wealthy, including an end to rebating the Stock Transfer Tax, a 50 percent Bankers' Bonus Tax on their cash bonuses, and the more progressive personal income tax that prevailed before the 1980s in New York State, would provide the revenues needed meet the states revenue sharing obligation.

7.How would your office encourage the development of sustainable solid waste management plans – plans which are both environmentally and economically sound?

- Adopt Zero Waste as the goal for solid waste management and develop a plan to reach the goal, as the government of New Zealand did in 2002.
- Promote legislation and regulations to make manufacturers responsible for the full life cycle of their products by taking back used packaging and products for remanufacturing, reuse, or recycling.
- Support state legislation to require packaging to be made of returnable, reusable and recyclable materials (Environmentally Sound Packaging Act)
- Increase state efforts by DEC to enforce (and assist in implementation of) municipal recycling efforts.
- Promote clean Materials Recovery Facilities for every community to improve the collection and marketing of recyclable materials.
- Promote curbside municipal yard and food waste composting programs.
- Encourage volume-based fees for municipal solid waste collection as a incentive to reduce waste.
- Oppose waste incinerators as emitters of toxic and greenhouse gases, sources of toxic ash for land fills, destroyers of recyclable materials, and competitors with remanufacturers, composters, and recyclers for solid wastes.

Public Transportation

8. How will your office control costs and encourage greater efficiencies at the MTA?

- Promote legislation to make the MTP board elected (two-thirds by the regional public, one-third by transit workers) so that it is accountable to the public and its workers, not the big banking and real estate interests that now dominate its board. The MTA now serves as a collection agency for the big banks, transferring public funds to the banks through interest on MTA bonds. Debt service in snow one-sixth of the MTA's \$12 billion budget and will consume one-fourth of its budget by 2017. The fares the public pays are a form of taxes. No taxation without representation.
- End the sweetheart, no-bid contracts and the undervalued land sales the MTA has been giving out to politically connected contractors and developers. Stop the practice of paying for the contracts for construction projects out of the capital budget but burdening the operating budget with the interest payments for the borrowings to pay for these contracts.
- Promote an independent audit with public and union participation of the MTA's books. From 2002 to 2004, the MTA ran a surplus while claiming a deficit to justify fare increases, according charges by the state comptroller.
- Promote a sales tax on the purchase of MTA bonds dedicated to MTA funding.
- Refinance MTA's debt at today's low interest rates.
- Promote congestion pricing and gasoline and carbon taxes as dedicated funding sources for mass transit as discussed above under Question 3.

9. What do you believe are the highest transit investments priorities for Upstate New York and what resources are you prepared to dedicate to achieve them?

The highest priorities:

- Complete Streets: Retrofitting urban, suburban, town, and village streets for safe pedestrian and bicycle use through sidewalks, cross-walks, crossing signals, traffic calming, speed bumps, multi-use paths, street trees, pedestrian refuge medians, protected bike lanes, and other safety measures.
- Urban Mass Transit: Expand, rebuild, and electrify metropolitan bus and rail mass transit. Cross subsidize public transport from gasoline and carbon taxes to keep fares low or free. Prioritize access for low to moderate income communities for commuting to jobs. Promote free transit to downtown districts to reduce traffic and encourage compact development.
- Interurban Rails: While high-speed wide-gauge rail is getting federal support and should be encouraged, New York State should undertake to rebuild the interurbans, the electrified narrow gauge rails that once connected virtually all the upstate cities and towns. They grew and thrived from the 1880s until the 1920s when government policy favored concrete roads for automobiles over the interurbans, often seizing their rights of way for highway construction. Most of interurbans that survived this assault did not survive the Great Depression.

The resources for these priorities would come a combination of sources:

- Dedicated funding sources like the gasoline and carbon taxes discussed in previous questions
- Increased general fund revenues from the progressive tax reforms discussed in previous

questions.

- Bonding and loans from a state-owned bank dedicated to financing a sustainable green economic recovery.