



**Jewish Climate Action Network NYC Testimony before the
2023 Environmental Conservation Joint Legislative Budget Hearing
February 14, 2023**

My name is Wendy Seligson. I am here today as co-director of the Jewish Climate Action Network NYC and a resident of the Bronx.

I am testifying today because our Jewish tradition compels us to act to address the climate crisis before us in order to preserve and protect the Earth and all of its creatures.

We join in this holy work with a growing movement of Jews inspired to act because of that tradition. Our members are from all denominations – Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Orthodox – as well as those who simply identify as being Jewish.

Jewish tradition calls us to act.

When Rabbi Joshua Heschel returned from Selma during the civil rights movement, he was asked, ‘Did you find much time to pray, when you were in Selma?’ He famously responded, ‘I prayed with my feet.’

Jewish tradition calls us to love, care for and protect the earth as its guardians- in Hebrew, *Shomrei Adamah*.

Jewish tradition calls us to revere our planet, to recognize it as a living dynamic being, having value beyond any one generation, and to fight for its survival for the generations to come.

We are also commanded in the Torah to love those who have been “othered” because we too were “othered” when we were slaves in Egypt.

As a JCAN member has so eloquently said: ‘This story, then, not only points us inward, it also points us outward. We must love those who are “othered,” to take note of them and hold them as precious human beings, and we must stand with them and fight alongside them as we fought for ourselves when we were oppressed.’



Thus, guided by our tradition, we are asking you to act boldly to meet the climate crisis on the scale needed and to do so with justice for those who have been othered.

- We ask that you fund \$10 billion for climate justice in this year's budget. Such a significant increase in climate and environmental justice funding is contained in several key funding proposals before you and it is achievable—with your support.
- We ask that you authorize the Climate and Community Protection Fund (CCPF) proposed by NY Renews. It is built around climate justice – to care for the other - so that communities, workers and small businesses thrive as we work as meet the mandates of the 2019 climate law and transition to renewable energy.
- We ask that you dig into the details and support the larger legislative climate roadmap. This includes the Climate, Jobs, and Justice Package (CJJP), which lays the groundwork for a just and equitable energy transition (Read more about the bills here: bit.ly/CJJPBills101) and other climate proposals before you as well, including electrification of new buildings as quickly as possible.

Join us in praying with your feet. Care for the stranger. Make this the year that we provide for all New Yorkers and lead the nation in caring for the earth.