

## PJIC Office Update, October-December 2017

*During the Fall 2017 semester, Ms. Krystle Bell, PJIC Office Intern, represented SCNY PJIC Office at several meetings that focused on climate sustainability in New York City.*

*Read highlights of two events in which she participated.*



The Sandy 5-Year Anniversary March on October 28<sup>th</sup> was in remembrance of the devastation of Superstorm Sandy and to demand elected officials to take bold steps to fight the climate crisis. Krystle Bell offers these insights, "It was curious to me how many people came out in support of the march's goals. I was surprised at how many different types of people showed up from places like Pennsylvania and New Jersey to protest and to march on City Hall to demand that NYC become more sustainable. From what I could

tell there were at least 500 people in attendance. There was a multitude of different races, religions and class groups. As a representative of the SCNY Office of Peace Justice and Integrity of Creation (PJIC), I marched with members of the Metro New York Catholic Global Movement and other faith based groups organized by Green Faith. I sincerely hope that the voices of the people were heard by those in power and I also hope that this event proves to the people that their strength lies in one another. Together we can create the positive changes we are all seeking."

### **Scientists, Advocates, Elected Officials Warn of Dire Consequences of Climate Change**

at Public Advocate Letitia James' November 29, 2017 hearing: Public Advocate James hosted a hearing to discuss the potentially catastrophic consequences of climate change and how New York City can implement strategies and solutions to challenge its effects. The hearing followed the fifth anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, on the heels of a disastrous hurricane season, and at a time when the federal administration is seeking to dismantle efforts to protect the environment.



"There is no greater threat to our planet than the consequences of climate change," said Public Advocate Letitia James. "As we witness record temperatures, storms, destruction, and displacement, we can no longer continue to consume and emit at this rate and without care for our impact. It is imperative that New York City utilize every tool at its disposal to protect our planet for generations to come." As a trustee of the New York City Employees' Retirement System (NYCERS), the City's largest public pension fund, Public Advocate James supported an immediate divestiture from coal in 2015. She also supported a long-term investment strategy, including commissioning a study to evaluate NYCERS' investment holdings in fossil fuel.

The results of the study, which are pending, will propose recommendations for reducing the impact that the City’s investments have on climate change, while ensuring the financial security of New York City retirees.



Below are some comments: All praised and thanked PA James for her leadership in this area. “Climate change is a very serious threat to the people of New York,” said State Senator Liz Krueger. “With the Federal government burying its head in the sand, New York City and State have a responsibility to take every step to avert disaster. Fossil fuel divestment is one important strategy among many that will be needed to bring about the clean-energy future that we need.”

"Five years after Superstorm Sandy, Lower Manhattan communities are still working to recover and build resiliency for future storms," said Council

Member Margaret Chin. “Combating climate change is vital to our public health and environmental safety,” said Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council's Environmental Protection Committee.

“Communities of color in New York City and around the world are bearing the disproportionate burden of climate inaction, while the industries driving the climate crisis remain largely unchecked,” said Robert Friedman, Policy Advocate for the Natural Resources Defense Council. “The immorality of investing in fossil fuels becomes more obvious with each passing year,” said Bill McKibben, the founder of the grassroots climate campaign 350.org and the Schumann Distinguished Scholar in environmental studies at Middlebury College. “Climate change is threatening our economy, infrastructure, freshwater supplies, agriculture, transportation systems, and public health,” said Lisa DiCaprio, Conservation Chair, Sierra Club NYC Group.



“From Hurricane Sandy to asthma and record heatwaves, NYC’s communities of color and low income suffer disproportionately from the effects of human-caused climate change. When decisions about climate and energy policy are made in NYC, the communities most impacted must have a seat at the table.”, said Stephan Roundtree, Policy Coordinator at WE ACT for Environmental Justice.

“The global DivestInvest movement is the fastest growing divestment movement in history because our message is simple – it’s wrong to profit from the destruction of the planet and the suffering of others,” said Denise Patel, MPH, Coordinator, DivestInvest Network. *K. Bell, 12.12.17*

*Thank you, Krystle Bell and Katerina Pecora, PJIC Office Interns for Fall 2017 semester! You furthered the work of the PJIC Office and embodied the spirit of charity in your passion and commitment to those who are vulnerable and in need. Blessings and prayers as you travel to the Philippines and Thailand respectively.*