



## **Testimony of Reinvent Albany for the Joint Legislative Hearing On Environmental Conservation**

**January 28, 2025**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Environmental Conservation budget issues. Reinvent Albany advocates for open, accountable New York government.

**Today, we are speaking to three environmental conservation issues:**

- 1. Support for the Stop Climate Polluter Handouts Act**
- 2. Support for immediate implementation of Cap-and-Invest**
- 3. Opposition to all proposed exemptions to the congestion toll**

**First, we urge the Senate and Assembly to put into your one-house budgets the Stop Climate Polluter Handouts Act ([A7949-A \(Simon\) / S3389 \(Krueger\)](#) of 2024), which ends \$336 million in fossil fuel subsidies.** The Senate included a version in their budget proposal last year. It makes no sense for the state to keep giving away hundreds of millions a year to oil and gas while pledging to implement policies to reduce global warming.

**Second, we urge the Senate and Assembly to reject the Governor’s proposal to pause the Cap-and-Invest program, and not accept her one-time \$1 billion capital appropriation over five years as a substitute.** [According to reporting by New York Focus](#), the \$1 billion the Governor proposed in the budget is to be spread out over five years, while \$3 billion is expected to be raised from Cap-and-Invest in its first year alone. Advocates have rightly called the \$1 billion proposal a “bait and switch” because the existing Cap-and-Invest program is ready for the next stage of the regulatory process. The program has undergone [considerable public discussion and input](#); similar to congestion pricing, there is no need to “pause it” for further study.

**Third, we urge you to uphold basic notions of fairness by not including any exemptions for paying congestion tolls in your budget.** The Legislature has already introduced ten bills that would give cynical and unfair tolling privileges to politically powerful special interests. The congestion tolls were set by an independent body that did an outstanding job of putting the broader public interest before political

privileges. We look to the Legislature to uphold the principles of broad benefit and basic fairness by not granting toll exemptions.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Tom Speaker, Legislative Director, at tom [at] reinventalbany.org.