RISE TO RESILIENCE

OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR FUTURE

POLICIES AND INVESTMENTS FOR A CLIMATE-RESILIENT NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

RISE TO RESILIENCE COALITION 2025 POLICY PLATFORM

A RESILIENT FUTURE IS WELL-MANAGED AND FUNDED IN A MANNER THAT IS TRANSPARENT, JUST AND GREEN:

Introduction

Rise to Resilience (R2R) is a campaign and coalition, comprised of more than 100 organizations representing residents, leaders in business, labor community and justice, volunteer organizations, scientists, environmental advocates, and design professionals **collectively calling on our federal, state, and local governments to make climate resilience an urgent priority**.

This policy platform was developed in several iterations with the Rise to Resilience Coalition Steering Committee, which includes members and representatives from the following organizations:

American Institute of Architects - NY Chapter, Columbia University Climate School's Center for Urban and Sustainable Development, Coney Island Beautification Project, Environmental Defense Fund, Future City Inc, LES Ready!, New Jersey Future, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, New Jersey VOAD, New York Building Congress, Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation, Rebuild by Design, Regional Plan Association, Regional Ready Rockaway, Riverkeeper, RISE, The Center for NYC Neighborhoods, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, and Waterfront Alliance.

This policy platform was also shared and discussed over four monthly Rise to Resilience Coalition meetings, where several organizations outside of the Rise to Resilience Coalition Steering Committee helped contribute to the priorities.

The future of our communities, jobs, safety, health, infrastructure, and wildlife and natural habitats are at risk from flooding, extreme heat, and other impacts associated with the climate crisis. Since the Coalition's launch in 2019, R2R has moved policy at every level of government: from influencing major climate resilience infrastructure, like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' New York-New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study, to climate design guidelines at the local level, to flood risk disclosure provisions for homeowners and renters. We continue to call for bold, inclusive, community- and evidence-based action from policymakers at every level of government. We're building a movement to make it happen.

We believe to improve the health of our region's people and environment, we must have clear leadership, approach the problem holistically, and fund and finance community- and science-based solutions in a way that is transparent, and prioritizes equity and justice in everything we do.

Beyond policy, **the Rise to Resilience Coalition prioritizes convenings aimed at educating partners and members** on the climate resilience work being done at the local, regional, and national level. Rise to Resilience meetings include updates and guest speakers from government agencies, elected officials, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions. These updates and guest speakers help to inform Coalition partners on existing work and opportunities for support and advocacy.

What We're Fighting For

A Plan

Establish regional and state-wide planning frameworks for advancing comprehensive resilience; integrate resilience into how and where we build infrastructure and where we retrofit or relocate.

Funding and Jobs

Establish reliable, robust long-term sources of federal, state, and local funding for flood resilience and green, well-paying jobs; leverage investments toward integrated flood protection, ecosystem restoration, and workforce development that puts our region to work building a resilient future for our communities.

AND AN APPROACH THAT IS

Transparent

Pass enforceable laws to help us plan for our futures and build awareness about risk, like flood risk disclosure. It's our right to know. Ensure that laws, policies, and programs that are designed to protect our communities are implemented to the fullest and most equitable extents.

Equitable and Just

Improve the resilience of public and private housing developments and infrastructure while building new high quality public and affordable housing on higher ground. Develop a forward-looking and proactive approach to effectively reducing risk. Consider need and equity in distribution of funds, with a goal of 40 percent of climate resilience funding toward frontline communities. Ensure retreat and relocation strategies are viable and just.

Green and Blue

Invest and plan for ecological resilience, monitoring, and restoration so that our communities, wildlife, and ecosystems are healthy for generations to come. Prioritize natural and nature-based solutions to climate change and sea-level rise, especially those that restore floodplains and ecosystems, and provide public access and open space.

What Unites Us

1

Infrastructure and housing must be safe and resilient to future conditions.

2

Information needs to be transparent and accessible — we all have the right to know our climate risk.

3

Adaptation strategies must be based in science and community-driven.

4

Public and private investments in resilience must flow to all, but especially those at greatest risk; low income communities and communities of color.

5

Well-paying, locally-hired, long-term green jobs are the basis of a resilient economy for all.

6

Solutions need to address both human needs and protect and restore wildlife and their habitats.

RISE TO RESILIENCE

2025 POLICY PRIORITIES

FUNDING

Continue Investing in Water and Climate Infrastructure (NY)

We urge the State of New York to continue investing equitably in funding streams for wastewater, drinking water, public access, and habitat protection infrastructure through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and Clean Water Infrastructure Act. We call for New York to allocate $500 million to the EPF. We encourage the State to allocate $600 million toward clean water infrastructure. Additionally, we are advocating for $200 million for capital project funding for the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and $100 million in capital project funding for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Lastly, we are closely monitoring the continued implementation of the $4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act, and we continue to call for the State to ensure communities and municipalities can access funding for projects to mitigate climate change, reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and conserve open space. We oppose Bond Act funding being used to replace existing State funding programs. The Bond Act was voted on as a mechanism to inject new, additional funding toward environmental projects.

Greater Investment in the New York City Budget for Parks

The Rise to Resilience Coalition stands with the **Play Fair Coalition** in urging New York City to commit an additional $95 million to the City's budget for the Parks Department ($713 million in total for FY26, up from $618 million in FY25). Parks not only offer climate solutions to flooding, water quality, and extreme heat, but also quality of life benefits to New Yorkers. The waterfront facilities maintained by the NYC Parks are nearly 80 years old, on average, which is a long stretch for infrastructure that takes constant abuse from water and weather.

Staff-Up at Key Climate Agencies

The Rise to Resilience Coalition celebrates the newly established Bureau of Coastal Resilience within the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). We would like to see this office codified into law and to see the office adequately funded with $8.5 million staffed to support the City's coastal and inland flood resilience. Additionally, we continue to call for key agencies and Mayoral Offices, like the Department of Parks and Recreation, Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ), and New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM), to be staffed at the necessary capacity to make good on existing planning and legislative mandates. In New York State, we recommend expanding staff capacity at the New York DEC to support the implementation of new wetland regulations and Bond Act funding. Additionally, we support allocating funding for a statewide Chief Resilience Officer and new State Office of Resilience. In New Jersey, we support adding capacity to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to support rulemaking and implementation under the New Jersey Protecting Against Climate Threats (NJ PACT).

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

Multi-Hazard Analysis, Community Empowerment, and Prioritization of Nature-Based Solutions in the New York-New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study (NYNJHATS)

The Rise to Resilience Coalition has been a national leader on advocacy surrounding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Rise to Resilience has successfully passed federal law, twice, through the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 and 2022, which have led to changes in the Army Corps approach to public engagement, multi-hazard analysis, and more. Most recently, the Coalition **penned a robust comment letter** to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ahead of the March 31, 2023 comment period deadline. As a direct result of our advocacy, the two non-federal sponsors for the project, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, have made a first-in-the-nation request under the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 for a multi-hazard study and strengthened community engagement.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers received a $4 million additional resource request (ARR) to continue planning efforts and support the selection of early actionable elements. We continue to advocate for a well-funded and more comprehensive resilience project from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, centered on studying multiple climate hazards, greater community engagement, formation of a Climate and Environmental Justice Working Group, prioritizing natural and nature-based features and non-structural solutions, and using the best available climate projections.

Establish a Permanent Voluntary Buyout Program in New York City

The Rise to Resilience Coalition urges New York City to implement a voluntary, permanent housing mobility and land adaptation program for residents in New York City, in accordance with the latest **PlaNYC** commitments. Sea level rise and related flooding are reshaping migration decision-making, as residents increasingly consider it as a factor in their housing decisions. This program must follow the **principles outlined in the Rainproof NYC collaboration**, which several members of the Rise to Resilience Coalition participated in. Any program should also include an educational component for impacted communities, along with dedicated staff for community aid. We are calling for New York City to leverage funding opportunities at the state and federal level to ensure the program will be long-lasting

Balance Growth, Density, and Climate Risks through Land Use and Zoning

Set limits and guidelines for new development in the floodplain. Zoning changes are needed to reconcile growth in areas at higher risk of climate change, with a particular focus on risk to housing and building stock through future decades. Potential growth in areas at lower risk of climate change can accommodate loss in higher risk neighborhoods. Moreover, we advocate for strengthening zoning codes by continuing to update the Zoning Resolution to include more Special Coastal Risk Districts to protect homes in vulnerable areas against the dangers of climate change, including the use of the most recent projections on storm surge, flood plains, and sea level rise. In accordance with the latest PlaNYC, the Rise to Resilience Coalition supports the development of minimum flood resilience standards for shoreline assets, led by the Bureau of Coastal Resilience within NYC DEP.

We support integrating design guidelines, like **WEDG®** (Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines), **New York City's Climate Resilience Design Guidelines**, New Jersey's **Protecting Against Climate Threats** (NJPACT), and **New Jersey's Inland Flood Protection Rule** into building code and infrastructure design standards, as well as incentivize the use of best practices in resilient and ecologically sound design. We also support and contribute to the addition of waterfront codes for non-building structures over water to the NYC Construction Codes.

Extend the Timeline for a Vote on the Brooklyn Marine Terminal

Provide additional time for thorough community engagement before holding a vote on any decision at Brooklyn Maritime Terminal. The Rise to Resilience Coalition is concerned about the lack of clear climate resilience considerations around the site. Any decision to repurpose industrial land must be based on thorough research, particularly because once industrial land is gone, it is gone forever. Decreased port capacity at BMT would lead to the loss of options to bring future construction materials and demolition waste to and from the city's major infrastructure projects—currently planned and those yet defined—including resilience projects such as the FiDi Seaport Master Plan.

Advance the Five Borough Climate Adaptation Plan and Climate Strong Communities

Commit to **Local Law 122** of 2021 and create a five borough climate adaptation plan that lays out an action plan for climate resilience and adaptation investments across the City, with focus on Environmental Justice and communities facing historic disinvestment. The Rise to Resilience Coalition continues to call for a unifying climate blueprint for decision making about climate resiliency investments. This roadmap for making New York City more resilient will identify the greatest climate-related threats facing New York City, and recommend a prioritized sequence of climate adaptation solutions for the short, medium, and long-term across different communities. A comprehensive plan for climate resilience and adaptation will support integrating the City's portfolio of infrastructure and planning into broader state and federal plans, like NYNJHATS and other resilience and adaptation projects.

Monitor and Track the Implementation of Flood Risk Disclosure Laws in NY and NJ

Build on the successful legislative effort to require flood disclosure information statewide to renters and homeowners in New York and New Jersey. Work with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to incorporate a forward-looking risk assessment component into their website that is easy to use and understand. The DEP website is the go-to resource for landlords, renters, property sellers and buyers to obtain specific flood risk information. Work with business associations to ensure the disclosures are being used and are effective.

Update the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan

Ensure that climate resilience and adaptation is prioritized in the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan ("State Plan"). The State Plan guides development decisions for where and how New Jersey should grow. It has not been updated in over 20 years and is now being revised. The content of the proposed update should include a clear adaptation framework calling for the identification of places to protect, fortify, and retreat from, as well as mapped areas where people and property are likely to be in harm's way due to flooding and other climate impacts.

Climate Change Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment Guide

Make it easier for towns to use the New Jersey Future-developed Guide to Local Climate Change Adaptation Planning and the climate resilience standards it promotes. The NJDEP can promote this through its technical assistance program. Pilot towns and early adopters can be incentivized to use the guide.

Implement Robust Rules for the Next Phase of NJDEP's Coastal Flood Rules

Review and assess the next phase of DEP climate rules, "Resilient Environments and Landscapes" (NJ REAL), which is expected to be proposed for comment this year. The Rise to Resilience Coalition will review and assess the new rules, then advocate for sensible, robust requirements and implementation.

ACTIVE LEGISLATION, PLANNING, AND HEARINGS

New York State

HIGH PRIORITY

The Rain Ready New York Act (S4071) clarifies the authority of local water & sewer authorities to manage stormwater and mitigate flooding more efficiently and effectively. The authorities can better address impacts from extreme rain events by prioritizing projects that lead to climate resilience and water quality improvements at the same time.

HIGH PRIORITY

The Climate Resilient New York Act of 2024 (S3590) establishes the office of resilience and a resilience task force to assess and identify climate related threats and develop a statewide resilience plan.

The Water Resiliency Project Funds Bill (S7764) establishes the water resiliency projects fund for flood mitigation, stormwater mitigation, and other water-related resiliency projects; makes an appropriation therefore.

Public Participation for Disadvantaged Communities (S2510A/A6584A) is crucial legislation with a step towards rectifying the exclusion of diverse voices in decision-making processes for major projects.

The Climate Education Act (S278A/A1559A) is a state climate education bill that includes new P-12 learning standards and courses of instruction across all grades and content areas, a professional learning resource hub for teachers, funding for green workforce development, and the creation of an office of climate education and workforce development.

New Jersey

The Caven Point Protection Act (S2956/A4468) designates and preserves Caven Point Peninsula in Liberty State Park as natural habitat.

Advance Resilient NJ Engagements into Action Plans. As part of New Jersey's climate resilience planning, Resilient NJ is an assistance program that supports local and regional climate resilience planning. Following robust community engagement, led by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), local and regional organizations, and towns and municipalities, the Rise to Resilience Coalition seeks to take the engagements a step further by coordinating Action Plans for how to swiftly advance climate resilience recommendations into actions.

New York City

Intro 1067: A bill to create an assistance program for homeowners experiencing groundwater flooding.

Intro 0816: A bill requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to notify owners of property when the City requests a base rental payment from the New York City Water Board.

Intro 0928: A bill requiring the Department of Transportation to conduct a pilot project on the use of cool pavement.

Intro 0998: A bill codifying the City's cooling center program.

Release the New York City Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Sustainable Stormwater Rate Study and host public engagements on the findings of the study, including a City Council hearing.

Eliminate the New York City Water Rental Payment

Abandon any future rental payment charge to the New York City Water Board. Waterfront Alliance supports New York City Council and New York State legislation to eliminate the water rental payment. This regressive tax originated at a time when there were mountains of debt related to the water and sewage systems, which have been rectified. Forcing a payment upon the Water Board not only further strains the budget of DEP and **handcuffs the city's ability to respond to climate change**, but puts pressure on homeowners and landlords.

New York City Council Support for State Climate Resilience Legislation: The New York City Council should sign letters of support for climate resilience legislation in Albany, to indicate support for (1) comprehensive statewide planning and (2) adoption of stormwater fees.

Hold Important New York City Council Oversight Hearings in the City Council Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency, and Waterfronts, for example:

- Oversight Hearing on New York City Department of Environmental Protection's Stormwater Adaptation Plan.
- Oversight Hearing on Climate Strong Communities (CSC) and Local Law 122. Update on current engagements and next steps for securing funding, as well as next steps for new neighborhoods.
- Joint Oversight Hearing with Committee on Parks and Recreation, to coincide with hurricane season and summer, on New York City's rainfall, storm, and extreme heat preparedness.

Additionally, set up a Rise to Resilience Coalition meeting with Chair Gennaro and with the New York City Council Progressive Caucus.

Improve and Expand the City's Stormwater Management Infrastructure, including the Cloudburst Management and Bluebelt Programs, utilizing both green and gray infrastructure. Additionally, **expand New York City's Green Infrastructure** program with a more robust grant or other incentive programs to catalyze installation on private property in targeted communities where benefits can be maximized.

RISE TO RESILIENCE

OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR FUTURE

Connect With Us

ttaba@waterfrontalliance.org

rise2resilience.org

The Rise to Resilience Coalition invites you to reach out to us or send feedback and suggestions by contacting or visiting us at https://rise2resilience.org.