



Sustainability Advisory Committee

MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, January 5, 2023

6:00 PM-7:30 PM

In Person, Albany City Hall

Meeting notice will be posted on the Sustainability Advisory Committee webpage at <https://www.albanyny.gov/342/Sustainability-Advisory-Committee>, the [Sustainable Albany Facebook page](#) and [Albany Office of Sustainability Facebook page](#).

Meeting will be livestreamed via Facebook.

Advance questions/comments from the public can be sent via Facebook message or emailed to: Sustainability@albanyny.gov

- Regular Business – 10 minutes
 - Call to Order and roll call – Commissioners, please send designee if unable to attend
 - Review/Approval of December 1, 2022 minutes
 - Public Comment Period (Approx. 3 minutes per comment)
- New Business –70 minutes
 - (10 minutes) Motion to approve Memo on Climate Plan Recommendation Process (attached, see next page).
 - (10 minutes) Motion to approve Letter to Governor in support of Bigger Better Bottle Bill (attached, see next page).
 - (5 minutes) Posting for interns wanted (we need one at least for outreach)
 - (10 minutes) preparing for Sustainability Tent at 75th Anniversary of Tulip Fest
 - (5 minutes) Annual Review Status
 - (15 min) Q&A for Department and Subcommittee Heads on Basis of their Submitted Reports
- Upcoming events, calls for Volunteers, call for new Members
- Adjourn

Next meeting –Thurs. February 2, 2023 at 6 pm.



Sustainability Advisory Committee

CLIMATE ACTION POLICY PLANNING

January 5, 2023

Dear Mayor Sheehan, President Ellis, and members of the Common Council,

The Sustainability Advisory Committee has initiated a process to develop a series of recommended steps that will align the City of Albany with New York State's climate policy, taking advantage of available State and Federal programs designed to encourage such actions, while attracting investment from private organizations in clean energy and infrastructure modernization.

We are confident that our research will help inform an updated climate action planning process. We are recommending the City seek funding to develop a revised Climate Action Plan through round seven of the NY Department of Environmental Conservation's Climate Smart Communities program, expected to be announced in February of 2023. Our recommendations will be grounded in research and formulated to ensure that the proposed steps are consistent with principles of environmental justice. We expect to research the following topics to put the City of Albany on a path towards near-zero carbon dioxide emissions by mid-century:

1. Preparation for enforcement of updated building codes that will require substantially improved energy efficiency.
2. Setting a deadline after which all new buildings in the City must be constructed without reliance on combustion of fossil fuels for heating.
3. Supporting development of a plan to convert existing buildings to non-fossil-fuel-based heating, contingent on available funding.
4. Accelerated deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
5. Sourcing increasing amounts of renewable energy for city operations, as well as business and residential use.
6. Climate change adaptation and resilience initiatives including but not limited to reducing heat stress.
7. Reducing methane emissions by promoting reduction of food waste and increased composting of food scraps.
8. Encouraging local food production, particularly in low-income communities, to provide an affordable supply of nutrient-dense foods in the face of an unstable climate.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership in this area.

Sincerely,



Daniel Kirk-Davidoff, Chair
On behalf of the Sustainability Advisory Committee
December 1, 2022
The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York
NYS State Capital Bldg.
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

As Mayor and Commissioner of the Department of General Services for the City of Albany, we are writing to express our strong support for updating New York's Returnable Container Act, commonly known as the 'Bottle Bill.' We believe it is time to modernize the law to include popular non-carbonated beverages, wine, spirits, and hard cider. Expanding the type of beverages in the Bottle Bill deposit program will result in billions of bottles being diverted from NYS landfills and incinerators. A recent national report found that redemption rates are estimated to increase up to 90% if the expansion of beverage types is coupled with an increase of the redeemable deposit value to a dime.

Modernizing the Bottle Bill is an economic and environmental justice issue. A Bigger, Better Bottle Bill will further reduce pollution, especially plastic pollution, all while lifting up workers in the recycling and redemption industry. It will help economically disadvantaged residents in Albany and the rest of the state who rely on collecting redemption containers to supplement their income.

Crucially, expansion will lower the cost burden of recycling on municipal governments like ours – and our taxpaying residents - by reducing the volume of glass and plastics that we must pay to process in the local materials recycling facility. It will also reduce the amount of non-recycled glass and plastic that ends up in our near-capacity landfill.

There are two important steps needed to modernize the current 40-year-old Bottle Bill and increase New York's recycling rate:

Expand the number of beverage containers covered by the Bottle Bill. New York would not be the first state to include non-carbonated beverages, wine, and liquor. Maine's Bottle Deposit Law includes all containers covered in New York's existing Bottle Bill plus wine, spirits, hard cider, and most non-carbonated beverages such as lemonade and iced tea. Maine has a 5-cent deposit for all beverages, except wine and liquor, which have a 15-cent deposit. Other states with Bottle Deposit Laws that include non-carbonated beverages include Connecticut, California, and Oregon.

Increase the amount of the deposit to a dime. The impact of the nickel deposit that was approved in 1982 has eroded over time. A mere inflation update would likely make that deposit nearly fifteen cents.

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To ensure that those who wish to redeem their deposits can easily do so, a portion of the additional revenues collected by the state should be used to ensure better compliance and enhance access to redemption entities.

There are three very important reasons to support the updating of the Bottle Bill. A Bigger, Better Bottle Bill will:

1. increase New York's recycling rates and reduce litter in both low-income and affluent communities.
2. reduce municipalities' waste burden and their solid waste disposal and recycling expenses.



3. stimulate job creation, benefit redemption center workers and provide increased income to those who most need it.

We urge your support for this important environmental and economic justice initiative. Including the Bigger, Better Bottle Bill in your FY 2023-2024 Executive Budget will assist Albany and other cities in New York State to reduce litter, enhance redemption recycling, reduce the cost burden of rising recycling processing rates, create jobs and provide income to disadvantaged communities.

Sincerely,

Kathy M. Sheehan Sergio Panunzio

Mayor, City of Albany Commissioner, Albany Dept. of General Services