



# Community Environmental Center

Energy Efficiency & Green Building Solutions

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Mayor Elect de Blasio,

I'm writing today to congratulate you on your historic election to New York City's mayoralty, and to express my support for your desire to maintain NYC's global leadership in urban sustainability. As the founder and executive of a not-for-profit organization that has pursued a wide range of environmental projects in New York City over the past 20 years, I also write to offer any assistance I can be to you in your commitment to our global environment and to further enhancing the sustainability of our City.

CEC is the largest not-for-profit provider of energy efficiency services in the City, having worked in 30,000 homes over the last twenty years. We are also the only energy efficiency organization to have a collective bargaining agreement with a labor union, LIUNA Local 10. In the past we have worked closely with the City's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability, HPD and the Buildings Dept, as well as NYSERDA, to design and implement environmental programs. I look forward to continuing this work with you and your Administration.

To start, I would like to make just a few suggestions as you plan your initial months in office.

**Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability** – First off, I would change the name to the Office of Sustainability and Resiliency (OSR) in order to more firmly signal a commitment to urban environmental responsibility. Secondly, I suggest empowering the OSR to work with each City agency to develop sustainability agendas and to then monitor and enforce their performance. This office can be your ombudsman for making sure the City is doing all that is possible to mitigate climate change.

Some of the first initiatives I would suggest are:

## DCAS and NYCHA

Based on your commitment to "make every government-owned building as green as is financially viable by 2020", CEC would recommend immediate attention be paid to existing efforts by DCAS and NYCHA to retrofit their portfolios. Over the past year both of these agencies (DCAS through DDC) have held competitive solicitations to identify qualified energy auditors and construction managers to deploy energy efficiency in the portfolios. Unfortunately, since these solicitations were closed, neither agency has moved forward with their energy retrofit plans. CEC strongly recommends that the incoming administration identify and overcome whatever hurdles are standing in the way of implementation.

## Libraries

New York City is fundamentally a City of neighborhoods, and our libraries have served a long-standing role as centers for community interaction. On an environmental level, they are the original 'reuse' centers throughout our City. Based on our experience working with the Queens Library Foundation, CEC believes that libraries could be effectively tasked with serving as community centers of sustainability. Upgraded with highly efficient lighting, environmentally responsible paints, energy monitoring equipment, and other highly visible, cost-effective environmental retrofits, libraries can be the model sustainable buildings in their communities. Together with

educational programming based around sustainability, the libraries can become your administration's outreach centers for community environmental education.<sup>1</sup>

#### Hospitals

As part of your commitment to save the City's under-resourced hospitals, you should launch an energy efficiency financing effort to reduce the energy wasted in these hospitals. We have visited such a facility and there are tens of thousands of dollars that can be saved annually if they had the capital and knowledge to upgrade their energy systems. We would suggest looking at NYCEEC as a place to assist with packaging financing for such an initiative.

#### Demolition and Reuse

CEC's program Build It Green! NYC runs two building material salvage and reuse centers in Astoria and Gowanus. We have seen first-hand how much waste building contractors create of lumber, appliances, cabinets, doors, and windows (among many other materials) that can be made available at greatly reduced prices for reuse rather than simply sending them to landfills. This not only saves New Yorkers money, but greatly reduces the pollution and greenhouse gases that come from manufacturing and waste facilities. NYC's Buildings Department could require that as a condition of issuing demolition permits, contractors would have to file a waste management plan demonstrating how it would maximize recycling and reuse in the demolition process.

#### Utilizing NYC's Rooftops for Sustainability

Lastly, our experience administering the NYC °Cool Roofs program since 2009 has demonstrated a valuable set of opportunities that the City could take to enhance the sustainability of our rooftops. We strongly urge that the °Cool Roofs program be continued in the coming years, with an expansion to include feasibility assessments for green roofs (for vegetation and urban farming), blue roofs (for rainwater retention), and renewable energy arrays. By providing support for these types of projects on publicly owned and low-income occupied buildings, the City could demonstrate the benefits of these types of projects to private building owners and begin a drastic overhaul of how the roofs of our buildings relate to the sustainability of our City as a whole.

CEC's mission is to do whatever we can to reduce greenhouse gases associated with NYC's building stock. I know you too share that mission. Please let me know if there is any way I can be helpful to you in our shared environmental goals.

Best regards, and congratulations,



Rick Cherry  
President & CEO  
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<sup>1</sup> As an aside, CEC has worked with a wide range of organizations through our affiliate Solar One to lay the groundwork for a renewable-powered, net-zero, resilient building developed to passive house standards that will be this country's first urban environmental exhibition hall, named Solar 2. Working with your administration to secure the final necessary support to construct Solar 2, we would recommend that it serve as the hub for a coordinated community environmental education and outreach effort through the City's library system.