



Climate Action Council Draft Scoping Plan Public Hearing

NOFA-NY Oral Testimony

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Syracuse NY

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Good evening, thank you for this opportunity to comment. I'm a lifelong resident of Central NY and grew up on a small livestock farm. Today, I'm here on behalf of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of NY. NOFA-NY is an education nonprofit and the largest USDA organic certifier in the state.

Agriculture and food systems are an essential part of our climate future so I'm going to share our top recommendations for strengthening the agriculture measures of the scoping plan. We'll also be submitting more extensive written comments that cover several other points.

First, the plan must do more to address inequities in our farming and food systems, including systemic racism, by investing in programs that enable underserved communities to access land and farming resources.

Second, NY must invest in certified organic and agroecological farms that build soil carbon, increase resilience to extreme weather, and reduce erosion, run-off, and nitrous oxide emissions. For example, the plan should:

- Include a mitigation strategy for converting 25% of NY farmland to organic by 2030
- Call for a comprehensive soil health program that builds on the measures in the new Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Act
- Include a requirement that agriculture and forestry projects that receive public funding use practices to build soil health

- Set statewide soil health goals to track progress, increase accountability, and ensure the permanence of soil-sequestered carbon
- Include out-of-state production of synthetic nitrogen fertilizers in the greenhouse gas inventory of NY farms and discourage the use of synthetic nitrogen fertilizers

The last point I will highlight today is that the plan can do more to strengthen urban and rural economies, by providing income to those who regenerate soil while producing our food through a Payment for Ecosystems Services program. A payment for ecosystems services program, designed with community input, would compensate farmers for the many interrelated and essential ecosystem services that their farms provide including climate regulation and resilience, flood mitigation, soil conservation, water quality protection, and enhancing biodiversity.

Thank you for your time.