

Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy (SHARE)
www.sharealbany.org

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**Record Heat Ahead, But No Solution:
SHARE, Residents Call for Hochul to Address the Impacts of Climate Change on
the Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood**

***Residents Speak Out on Cancer Impacts from State's Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant
Call for Hochul to Shut Plant Down
SHARE says Governor Should Sign Superfund Bill to Protect Against Future Climate Harms***

ALBANY -- On a day where temperature topped 90 degrees in Albany, several residents and members of the Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy (SHARE) told gripping personal stories about how the climate crisis has impacted their neighborhood, including cancer, flooding and extreme heat. Residents called upon Governor Hochul to shut down the Sheridan Hollow Steam Plant (SASP), which heats and cools the Capitol and other nearby state buildings with fossil fuels, and to rapidly move towards heating, cooling and powering state buildings in downtown Albany with renewables.

"The Governor and her administration are talking about climate change, including recently to the Pope. They also understand its effects, including ever hotter summers, flooding and pollution," said **Sheridan Hollow resident Lillian Garland**. "Where the Governor is falling short is developing meaningful solutions. If the Governor is really serious about climate change, she needs to shut down the Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant as rapidly as possible and instead heat and cool area state buildings as laid out in SHARE's Renewable Capitol Act. With renewables, we will alleviate the harms to our neighborhood and help New York to meet its climate goals."

"From 1911 to the present, Sheridan Hollow and surrounding neighborhoods have been adversely impacted by the Sheridan Hollow Steam Plant and the adjoining ANSWERS plant, which closed in 1994," said **Mert Simpson, who represents the Sheridan Hollow neighborhood in the Albany County Legislature and serves as a SHARE co-chair**. "Over the years, these facilities subjected the community to serious health risks by burning coal, oil, trash and now fracked gas. Residents of this environmental justice community have suffered significant health damage in the form of respiratory illness, cancer and other adverse health effects. In recent years residents from Myanmar have moved across the street and directly behind the SASP. It is long past the time for the residents of this community to be relieved of this life-threatening environmental racism. The plant needs to be shut down as soon as possible."

"Last year, Rio de Janeiro reached a temperature of 138 degrees. Here at home, the average summer temperature in Albany is now 3.7 degrees higher than in 1970. If you are a senior citizen and do not have air conditioning, how can you survive these kinds of summers? We need to address the climate crisis, and to fund ways to address the consequences to residents and city budgets of our ever-hotter planet, like the Superfund Act," added **Simpson**.

Albany resident **Emma Jenkins** said that: "When I lived near the Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant, my father Jesse Jamison died from pancreatic cancer, my uncle Cleveland Rowell died from stomach cancer, my cousin Linda Davis died from breast cancer, my cousin Willie D. Turner died from pancreatic cancer and my uncle James Edward Hubbard died from liver cancer.

Janice Wallace said that: "I'm responding for my late husband Willie Wallace who died from lung cancer in 2000. He lived in the area of the Powerhouse and experienced all the bad things that was produced from this plant. He lived at 229 Sheridan Avenue, then moved to 240 and 219 Orange Street, where he lived from the early '50s to his death in 2000. It's really sad that this is still going on in our area."

Resident **Betty Smith** said that: "When we lived near the SASP, my mother Ethel Perry contracted colon cancer. My brother Jeffrey White contracted throat cancer. They're both presently deceased. It is essential to shut down the Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant immediately. Use clean energy instead to fuel the Empire State Plaza complex."

"My block was reconstructed which has almost solved flooding on Elk Street. However, the work required removing our street trees which raises the heat gain of our homes tremendously, said **Dan Plaat, a neighborhood resident and Green Party representative**." As my block was fixed up, the walks are still impermeable, and in the last heavy storm with larger vehicles parked against the curb the rush of water jumped the curb and still ran under our stoops and into basements. The city and county in the last 8 years have moved to repair and rehab various infrastructures, but the current rate is a trickle when it should be a flood. In the time it takes to fix the mistakes of the last century we will be suffering the damage from this century's disasters which are now hitting us as we said they would. My message is that damage control will not save us. We must cut emissions, work ecologically, and put people first and profit last."

Dr. David Walker, Professor Emeritus at Columbia University, has found that respiratory cancers occurred at 1.56 to 3 times the expected rate in the Sheridan Hollow and adjoining Arbor Hill neighborhoods, based on data from 2013 to 2017.

SHARE also called upon the Governor to sign the Climate Change Superfund Act (S2129/A3351), which would create a "climate superfund" to fund Albany and other municipalities to clean up climate damage and prevent future harms like flooding that are brought on by climate change.

"Albany and every municipality across the state is facing hundreds of millions of dollars in costs to repair damages from increased climate-related extreme storms that destroy roads, bridges, homes and businesses from flooding and high winds, for instance," said **Anne Rabe, New York**

Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) Environmental Policy Director. "Last year, taxpayers paid for those costs to the tune of over \$2 billion. Local governments also need to build resilient infrastructure and create community protection programs to address extreme heat, hurricanes and other climate-related problems. The Assembly and Senate passed the Climate Superfund Act requiring climate polluters -- Big oil companies -- to finally pay their fair share of climate costs. We call on Governor Hochul to immediately sign this bill into law and provide relief to taxpayers and fund much-needed protection programs."

In its just completed session, the Legislature failed to pass the Renewable Capitol Act (S2689/A5633), drafted by SHARE, which mandates a conversion of Capitol complex to renewable energy within three years. The Senate included the Act in its "one-house" budget resolution. The law did not ultimately pass, likely partly due to unsubstantiated claims by the Governor's staff about high costs and feasibility issues.

According to Climate Central, an independent group of scientists and communicators, the average summer temperature in Albany is now 3.7 degrees higher than in 1970. Albany's average summer season is also lengthier. National EPA (Environmental Protection Act) data states that the summer heat wave season has been 46 days longer on average in this decade than in the 1960s. The Climate Action Council, a majority of whose members are state agency commissioners, has recognized the connection between hotter summers and the health of New Yorkers.

A [May study undertaken for SHARE](#) found that replacing the existing gas-fired steam system with geothermal heating and cooling to be very feasible. The call to shut down SASP is particularly urgent in light of a [report](#) issued last week indicating that New York is unlikely to meet the 70% renewable energy target in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, the 2019 state climate law. The state has continued to withhold a long overdue study on decarbonizing the Capitol and Empire State Plaza. SHARE is filing appeals today under the state Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) due to the State's failure to release the study and other critical data relevant to decarbonizing the Capitol complex.

The Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy (SHARE) is a coalition of Capital area residents and statewide advocates that since 2017 has been calling for the shutdown of SASP and for state buildings in downtown Albany to be run on renewable energy.