STATE OF NEW YORK

6879

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

March 25, 2025

Introduced by Sen. RAMOS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law and the labor law, in relation to establishing the New York youth climate corps

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Legislative findings. 1. The legislature recognizes that climate change and environmental degradation are two of the greatest challenges facing the state and the world today, and that we must mobilize New York's workforce and youth to create a clean energy economy and strengthen our communities and ecosystems in the face of climate impacts.

2. The legislature finds that service provides a unique opportunity to mobilize young adults to build clean energy and climate-resilient communities, economies, and ecosystems. Growing equity-centered, climate-related service programs and addressing critical gaps in service opportunities will broaden access to service, ensuring that young adults of all backgrounds, especially from overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, can serve. Doing so will also ensure that service programs address the needs of communities across the state, especially those communities disproportionately impacted by environmental and health burdens.

3. The legislature further finds that as our state transitions away from a fossil fuel-based economy, we must do so in a way that fosters innovation, investment, and growth in clean energy technology sectors and jobs so our businesses, workforce, and communities can thrive. As state, federal, local, and tribal governments implement policies to mitigate the destructive forces of climate change, there will be consequences for New York's businesses, workers, and communities. Accomplishing an equitable transition will require identification of future industry occupations and skill needs, the existing workforce's transferable

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD09525-01-5

skills to meet those needs, and the gaps that need to be addressed through training and education. The state must provide support in the transition for workers and communities experiencing declining jobs and revenues associated with high emissions technologies. The state must also encourage the creation of a pipeline starting in the education system that leads today's youth into the clean energy careers of tomorrow.

4. Therefore, to create pathways for young adults to help build a clean energy, climate-resilient future, the legislature intends to create the New York youth climate corps. State involvement in the transition to a climate resilient economy and the youth climate corps' role in the implementation of the Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022 are critical to ensuring a faster, more equitable transition that benefits all.

§ 2. The environmental conservation law is amended by adding a new article 59 to read as follows:

ARTICLE 59
NEW YORK YOUTH CLIMATE CORPS

Section 59-0101. Definitions.
59-0103. Establishment.
59-0105. Duties.
59-0107. Advisory board.

§ 59-0101. Definitions.

As used in this article, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1. "New York youth climate corps" shall mean the office established under section 59-0103 of this article.

2. "Approved host sites" shall mean not-for-profit corporations, public agencies, local governments, educational institutions, labor organizations, Indian tribes, and any other entities approved by the New York youth climate corps and in compliance with the corps' minimum workplace requirements.

3. "Minimum workplace requirements" shall mean the minimum diversity, workplace safety, and wage requirements set for host sites by the New York youth climate corps.

§ 59-0103. Establishment.

The New York youth climate corps is established to support and grow climate-related service opportunities for young adults with the objective of building low-carbon and climate-resilient communities, ecosystems, and economies while providing education, workforce development, and career pathways to service members, with a focus on disadvantaged communities as defined in section 75-0111 of this chapter. The New York youth climate corps shall be an office within the New York commission on national and community service, a governmental entity created by executive order one hundred seventy-nine, signed December thirtieth, nineteen hundred ninety-three.

§ 59-0105. Duties.

The New York youth climate corps shall have the following duties:

1. Seek funding from article fifty-eight of this chapter to further the purposes of this article.

2. Connect, amplify, and grow climate-related service opportunities to mobilize and train young adults to build clean energy and climate-resilient communities, economies, and ecosystems, with a focus on disadvantaged communities as defined in section 75-0111 of this chapter.

3. Develop and administer a service-learning program that provides training to New York youth climate corps service members during their tenure of service. The service-learning program must provide training and learning opportunities to develop leadership skills, foster environmental stewardship and civic engagement, and expose members to an array of climate-related professional and educational opportunities. The New York youth climate corps shall coordinate with the following entities in the design and administration of the service-learning program: service programs; Indian tribes; environmental justice organizations; labor organizations; institutions that provide career and technical education; and any other organizations as appropriate.

4. Work with approved host sites to unlock state and federal funding provided approved host sites comply with the funding requirements of those sources and the youth climate corps' minimum workplace requirements.

a. New York youth climate corps administrators shall coordinate, manage, and distribute AmeriCorps grants, funds allocated through article fifty-eight of this chapter, and any other sources of state or federal funding, to approved host sites.

b. New York youth climate corps administrators shall assist approved host sites in applying for the empire state apprenticeship tax credit, including any preliminary requirements, such as registering as apprenticeship programs and drafting apprenticeship agreements.

c. Approved host sites who engage in the construction trade, as defined in paragraph three of subdivision (b) of section twenty-five-c of the labor law, shall not be barred from applying for the empire state apprenticeship tax credit, notwithstanding paragraph one of subdivision (b) of section twenty-five-c of the labor law.

5. New York youth climate corps administrators shall assist approved host sites in applying for the New York youth jobs program tax credit, including the preparation of reports required by paragraph one of subdivision (e-1) of section twenty-five-a of the labor law.

6. New York youth climate corps administrators shall assist approved host sites in applying, where applicable, for funding from the department and the New York state energy research and development authority including but not limited to the climate smart communities grant program, the climate justice fellowship, and the on-the-job training for energy efficiency program.

§ 59-0107. Advisory board.

There shall be created within the New York youth climate corps an advisory board whose members shall serve without pay, meet not less than twice each year and whose sole purpose shall be to advise as to the management, of such youth climate corps. Such advisory board shall consist of the following representatives: the executive director of the New York commission on national and community service; the director of programs of the New York commission on national and community service; an official partaking in the implementation of the environmental bond act from the department; an official partaking in the implementation of the environmental bond act from the department of parks, recreation, and historic preservation; an official partaking in the implementation of the environmental bond act from the department of housing and community renewal; an official from the department of labor; and a representative from a labor organization, to be appointed by the governor.

§ 3. Subparagraph (B) of paragraph 1 of subdivision (c) of section 25-c of the labor law, as amended by section 1 of subpart B of part N of

chapter 59 of the laws of 2017, is amended and a new subparagraph (C) is added to read as follows:

(B) in lieu of the credit specified in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, for each qualified apprentice who is considered a disadvantaged youth for each tax year: (1) five thousand dollars for each first year apprentice; (2) six thousand dollars for each second year apprentice; and (3) seven thousand dollars for each third, fourth, or fifth year apprentice. The apprentice's status as a first, second, third, fourth or fifth year apprentice will be determined on the last day of the calendar year, or if the apprentice is no longer employed by the participating employer on the last day of the calendar year, on the last day of the apprentice's employment with the participating employer. If a disadvantaged youth begins an apprenticeship before the age of twenty-five, a certified employer shall be eligible to continue to receive the tax credit for such youth under this subparagraph until that apprentice completes the apprenticeship[~~.~~]**; or**

(C) in lieu of the credits specified in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of this paragraph, for youth climate corps employers: (1) five thousand dollars for each first year apprentice; (2) six thousand dollars for each second year apprentice; and (3) seven thousand dollars for each third, fourth, or fifth year apprentice. The apprentice's status as a first, second, third, fourth or fifth year apprentice will be determined on the last day of the calendar year, or if the apprentice is no longer employed by the participating employer on the last day of the calendar year, on the last day of the apprentice's employment with the participating employer.

§ 4. Paragraph a of subdivision 2 of section 58-0303 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

a. The commissioner and the commissioner of the division of housing and community renewal or any other department or state agency that has received funds suballocated pursuant to this section may enter into agreements with municipalities, [~~and~~] not-for-profit corporations**, public agencies, local governments, educational institutions, labor organizations, and Indian tribes** for the purpose of implementing a program pursuant to this section.

§ 5. Subdivision 3 of section 58-0303 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

3. The department, the office of parks, recreation, and historic preservation [~~and~~]**,** the department of state **and the New York commission on national and community service** are authorized to provide state assistance payments or grants to municipalities [~~and~~]**,** not-for-profit corporations**, public agencies, local governments, educational institutions, labor organizations, and Indian tribes,** and undertake projects pursuant to paragraph a of subdivision one of this section.

§ 6. Subdivision 4 of section 58-0303 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

4. The department [~~and~~]**,** the office of parks, recreation, and historic preservation**, and the New York commission on national and community service** are authorized to provide state assistance payments or grants to municipalities [~~and~~]**,** not-for-profit corporations**, public agencies, local governments, educational institutions, labor organizations, and Indian tribes,** and undertake projects pursuant to paragraph b of subdivision one of this section. Culvert and bridge projects shall be in

compliance with the department's stream crossing guidelines and best management practices, and engineered for structural integrity and appropriate hydraulic capacity including, where available, projects flows based on flood modeling that incorporates climate change projections and shall not include routine construction or maintenance undertaken by the state or municipalities.

§ 7. Subdivision 5 of section 58-0303 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

5. The department [~~and~~], the office of parks, recreation, and historic preservation**, and the New York commission on national and community service** are authorized to provide state assistance payments or grants to municipalities [~~and~~], not-for-profit corporations**, public agencies, local governments, educational institutions, labor organizations, and Indian tribes,** and undertake projects pursuant to paragraph c of subdivision one of this section.

§ 8. Subdivision 2 of section 58-0503 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

2. The department or the office of parks, recreation and historic preservation are authorized to undertake open space land conservation projects, in cooperation with willing sellers pursuant to subdivision one of this section and may enter into an agreement for purchase of real property or conservation easements on real property by a municipality [~~or~~], a not-for-profit corporation**, public agency, local government, educational institution, labor organizations, or Indian tribe**. Any such agreement shall contain such provisions as shall be necessary to ensure that the purchase is consistent with, and in furtherance of, this title and shall be subject to the approval of the comptroller and, as to form, the attorney general. In undertaking such projects, such commissioners shall consider the state land acquisition plan prepared pursuant to section 49-0207 of this chapter. Further, the department or the office of parks, recreation and historic preservation are authorized to provide state assistance payments to municipalities **and the New York commission on national and community service** for eligible projects consistent with paragraphs a and c of subdivision one of this section.

§ 9. Subdivision 4 of section 58-0503 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

4. The department and the department of agriculture and markets are authorized to provide, pursuant to paragraph b of subdivision one of this section, farmland preservation implementation grants to county agricultural and farmland protection boards pursuant to article [~~twenty-five-aaa~~] **twenty-five-AAA** of the agriculture and markets law, or to municipalities, soil and water conservation districts [~~or~~], not-for-profit corporations **or the New York commission on national and community service** for implementation of projects.

§ 10. Subdivision 7 of section 58-0503 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

7. The commissioner and a not-for-profit corporation **or the New York commission on national and community service** may enter into a contract for the undertaking by the not-for-profit corporation of an open space land acquisition project.

§ 11. Subdivision 2 of section 58-0703 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

2. The department, the department of agriculture and markets, the office of parks, recreation and historic preservation, the New York state energy research and development authority [~~and~~], the office of general services, and the New York commission on national and community service are authorized to provide state assistance payments or grants to municipalities [~~and~~], not-for-profit corporations, public agencies, local governments, educational institutions, labor organizations, and Indian tribes, or undertake projects pursuant to this section.

§ 12. Subdivision 2 of section 58-0903 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

2. The department [~~and~~], the New York state environmental facilities corporation, and the New York commission on national and community service are authorized to provide state assistance payments or grants to municipalities, not-for-profit corporations, public agencies, local governments, educational institutions, labor organizations, and Indian tribes for projects authorized pursuant to paragraphs a, b, and d of subdivision one of this section.

§ 13. Subdivision 4 of section 58-0903 of the environmental conservation law, as added by section 1 of part UU of chapter 59 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

4. The department [~~is~~] and the New York commission on national and community service are authorized to make grants available to not-for-profits [~~and~~], academic institutions, public agencies, local governments, educational institutions, labor organizations, and Indian tribes for paragraphs b, c, and f of subdivision one of this section, and make state assistance payments to municipalities, not-for-profit corporations, public agencies, local governments, educational institutions, labor organizations, and Indian tribes and undertake projects pursuant to this section.

§ 14. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.