

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 11, 2020

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**MAYOR DE BLASIO APPOINTS LEADING SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS TO THE
FOURTH NEW YORK CITY PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

Diverse, interdisciplinary panel will help New York City further expand its climate adaptation efforts by providing authoritative, actionable science on future climate impacts

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio announced today the appointment of the fourth New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC), a 20-member independent advisory body that synthesizes scientific information on climate change and advises City policymakers on local resiliency and adaptation strategies to protect against rising temperatures, increased flooding, and other hazards.

“As we continue on the path to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to center climate justice in our approach,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I’m confident this panel of scientific experts will ensure that we have the data we need to fight global warming and create a more resilient city.”

“As we respond to the current COVID-19 crisis, we remain focused on the critical work of preparing for global warming and advancing climate justice in New York City,” said **Jainey Bavishi, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Resiliency**. “To adapt to a rapidly changing climate and volatile environment, we need credible, legitimate and relevant science to inform our decisions. We’re thrilled to partner with such a highly credentialed, interdisciplinary, and diverse group of experts to create a more just and more resilient city.”

The Panel will be led by a team of five co-chairs who possess a broad spectrum of disciplinary expertise including climate science, demography, engineering, geography, vulnerability analysis, global change, architecture, and urban planning. Both the full NPCC and its leadership team were selected to ensure a diversity of backgrounds, research disciplines, and fields of technical practice.

NPCC started in 2009 and was codified in Local Law 42 of 2012 with a mandate to provide an authoritative and actionable source of scientific information on future climate change and its potential impacts. Past iterations of the NPCC have upheld this responsibility by publishing assessment reports that synthesize several years of research and analysis.

The 4th NPCC will expand on this model by producing series of NPCC4 products beginning in late 2021. This will ensure that the Panel is flexible and responsive to short-term research needs – a function that is all the more important considering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

on New York City and the interactions between the current health crisis with the ongoing climate crisis. As part of this expanded approach, the Panel will also release a fourth assessment report.

Additionally, this will be the first NPCC to work with a dedicated team focused on climate science and risk communications within the Mayor's Office of Resiliency (MOR). MOR and the 4th NPCC will collaborate to strengthen the evidence base for climate action, translate data into actionable information, and clearly articulate the present and future risks associated with global warming.

The work of the Panel will continue to inform Mayor de Blasio's ongoing efforts to ensure that New York City is prepared to withstand and emerge stronger from the threat of climate change. Following Hurricane Sandy, the City channeled major investments into climate change adaptation and has now committed more than \$20 billion to adaptation efforts. These efforts include both completed projects—like the Reconstructed Rockaway Boardwalk and wetland restorations in Sawmill Creek and Sunset Cove Park—and also ongoing efforts, including coastal protections in all five boroughs as well as programs to increase social resiliency, strengthen small businesses, and harden critical infrastructure.

Below is the full list of appointees:

- Dr. Deborah Balk (Baruch College – CUNY) – **Co-chair**
- Dr. Christian Braneon (NASA GISS) – **Co-chair**
- Dr. Robin Leichenko (Rutgers University) – **Co-chair**
- Dr. Richard Moss (Princeton University) – **Co-chair**
- Mr. Joel Towers (The New School) – **Co-chair**
- Dr. Ana Baptista (The New School)
- Dr. Janice Barnes (Climate Adaptation Partners)
- Dr. Sheila Foster (Georgetown University)
- Dr. Radley Horton (Columbia University)
- Dr. Kim Knowlton (Columbia University – Mailman School for Public Health)
- Dr. Nicole Maher (The Nature Conservancy)
- Dr. Peter Marcotullio (Hunter College – CUNY)
- Dr. Thomas Matte (Columbia University; independent consultant)

- Dr. Timon McPhearson (The New School)
- Dr. Katherine McComas (Cornell University)
- Dr. Franco Montalto (Drexel University)
- Dr. Philip Orton (Stevens Institute of Technology)
- Dr. Bernice Rosenzweig (Sarah Lawrence College)
- Dr. Jack Tchen (Rutgers University)
- Dr. Gernot Wagner (New York University)

"In this time of crisis and struggle for justice, it is vital to energize action with a science-based and equitable vision for the city's future. We look forward to working with the members of NPCC4 and with the Mayor's Office of Resiliency to provide climate-risk information needed to achieve a just, resilient, and sustainable City for all New Yorkers. NPCC4 will assess the state of climate adaptation and resiliency to support evidence-based decision making amidst uncertainty. Our collective work will guide us toward transformative adaptation that fosters justice and equity," said the **NPCC Co-Chairs**.

"As the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown us yet again, risk exposure is highly uneven. I am grateful for this opportunity to apply my engineering skills to help conceptualize infrastructure and policies that will reduce climate risks, especially in the city's most vulnerable communities," said **Dr. Franco Montalto**.

"The Nature Conservancy commends the City of New York for its continued work in assessing and preparing for the challenges created by climate change, particularly as those challenges relate to creating a more just and resilient city," said **Dr. Nicole Maher**. "We need to take a multi-generational view of what we want New York to be in the future, given what we value and the constraints we face in a climate-changing world. Nature, in the form of trees and coastal wetlands, and green infrastructure, such as green roofs, can play central roles in helping us both ease and adapt to climate change's challenges. The choices the City makes today can ensure our natural systems, and their benefits to communities, thrive not just for us but for future generations."

"The potential of increased frequency and intensity of climate change driven extreme events including heat waves, extreme rainfall, and coastal storms means, now more than ever, New York City must urgently advance solutions to adapt to our new climate reality and build social, ecological, and infrastructural resilience. As COVID and recent weather extremes have made clear, impacts are disproportionate with often low-income and minority communities taking the brunt of impacts and risks. I look forward to working with the NPCC to build the knowledge base for understanding key risks and advancing systemic solutions for resilience and climate justice," said **Dr. Timon McPhearson**.

“I look forward to working with this great team and the Mayor’s Office to understand the science of rising threats of coastal flooding and to help inform the City’s planning and adaptation,” said **Dr. Philip Orton**.

“I am thrilled to support NYC's work at the vanguard of climate resilience, facing challenging questions head-on. One such question is how to prepare for the direct and indirect impacts of connected extreme events, both within the region and beyond,” said **Dr. Radley Horton**.

“COVID-19 showed us in real time -- and on warp speed -- how climate might play out: Runaway exponential growth; unprecedented economic impacts; untold deaths and suffering, especially among the poor and vulnerable. It will be crucial to take the lessons from COVID-19, and then some, and help tackle climate change, an even more important, systemic risk problem,” said **Dr. Gernot Wagner**.

###