

AIA New York Statement on New York State Governor Hochul's Budget proposal
February 21, 2023

Since our founding in 1857, the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter (AIA New York) and our members have worked to advance the quality of life of New Yorkers and protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. AIA New York supports Governor Hochul's budget proposal and its efforts to tackle climate change, the housing crisis, and much-needed infrastructure improvements. However, we would like to express concern that the budget does not address some of these issues aggressively enough.

We congratulate Governor Hochul for planning to implement multiple programs that will end our dependence on fossil fuels for both new and existing buildings. However, as the budget is currently written, there are multiple exceptions for large buildings and certain types of buildings three stories or below that would be permitted to continue to use fossil fuels past 2025. We believe that a January 1, 2025 deadline for all small buildings would be a more appropriate target, as time is of the essence in the fight against climate change. With the right level of urgency and commitment, we are confident that New York can lead the way in creating a more sustainable and livable future for all.

We also applaud the Governor's forward-thinking approach to addressing the ongoing housing crisis by committing to the construction of 800,000 new affordable housing units over ten years, including a five-year, \$25 billion housing plan to create and preserve 100,000 affordable homes. This critical investment will provide much-needed relief to families struggling to find affordable and safe places to live. The budget will also extend the completion deadline for vested 421a projects by four years to June 2030, offering projects that suffered delays during the COVID-19 pandemic the opportunity to seek the tax abatement. However, we are concerned that the budget does not tackle the housing crisis quickly enough to address the serious shortage in affordable and supportive housing. More should be done to incentivize the construction of affordable housing, including a replacement for the J-51 tax abatement and a total overhaul of 421a. While considerably more housing than outlined in the budget will need to be created and preserved in the years to come, it is nonetheless reassuring to see the Governor acknowledging this issue with greater emphasis.

In addition to addressing critical social and environmental issues, the budget proposal also recognizes the importance of investing in our state's infrastructure. The Central Business District Tolling Program, also known as the congestion pricing plan, will address gridlock in Manhattan and help finance the MTA's capital improvements. Improving accessibility by making 70 more subway stations ADA-accessible and continuing work on Second Avenue Subway Phase 2 to extend service from 96th street to 125th street and connect with Metro-North are crucial steps towards a modern, efficient, and accessible transportation system. These infrastructure investments will not only improve the quality of life for our communities but will also drive economic growth and competitiveness for years to come.

Together, these initiatives in the budget proposal will not only protect our environment and combat climate change but also improve the lives of all New Yorkers. We commend Governor Hochul for pushing these initiatives forward in her budget proposal.