

COMMIT TO MAKE THIS THE RESILIENCE DECADE



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As we approach the 9th anniversary of Sandy, it's easy to see how swiftly a decade can pass without building enough resilience for this climate-changed era. Now our New York City metropolitan leaders have the chance to fix those wrongs and make the next ten the "Resilience Decade."

Hurricane Ida's sudden and frightening destruction in the New York City metropolitan area underscores the obligation of public and private sector leaders to partner and accelerate plans for solving the uppermost challenge of our time: climate change.

If they fail to create resilience to climate risks, they will jeopardize the region's immense strength as a center of world commerce. (Similarly, the leaders of nations at the upcoming U.N. climate talks - COP26 - must do the same and agree on climate resilience actions beyond just setting goals and deadlines for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.)

The time for hand-wringing is over. No sane leader thinks these disastrous climate change events and pandemics will decline in frequency any time soon. They also know that countless families, businesses, government services and the overall economy face devastating consequences if climate amelioration initiatives aren't taken - and fast.

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In the New York Metro Region, it's not that private and public sector leaders don't have strong examples of promising climate adaptation elsewhere to consider. Miami Beach serves as a prime illustration as it deals with an estimated one-inch-a-year rise in sea level. It's using the best available technology and science to prepare its physical infrastructure for climate events. It's elevating roads, upgrading its stormwater system and, smartly, including power redundancy in its pumping stations. The public and private sectors are collaborating there to further climate resilience efforts.

There is no dearth of actions Metro New York and regional leaders can take. They can more quickly assess the vulnerability and exposures to climate change to its assets and neighborhoods. Address the risks through preparedness, mitigation and disaster risk financing. Assess hazards and establish strategic

priorities for dealing with them. And shape resilience plans for the region's workforce and neighborhoods.

Even more important, New York municipal leaders must institute a cost-benefit analysis, or CBA that prioritizes resilience in decision-making. The so-called triple bottom line accounting framework encompasses social, environmental and financial pillars is well-suited to the resilience decade's demands. Very simply, CBA excludes the social and environmental benefits that accrue over time, even decades after a project's completion. So, the intangibles that make a city livable and enhance residents' ability to thrive aren't communicated within the bottom line. This creates social inequities that must be considered as New York leaders adopt climate-change driven actions.

Strong, decisive and effective initiatives are available to deal with climate change. They must be taken so we can make this the Resilience Decade. So, here's the call to action for public and private sector leaders: Grasp that mitigation and adaptation are complementary strategies for creating climate resilience and managing climate risk. Work together as partners to quickly determine the best way to make the region climate resilient.

Otherwise, the consequences of another Hurricane Ida could turn this into the Disaster Decade.