



## COUNTY OF DUTCHESS

MARCUS J. MOLINARO  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**TO: Climate Smart Communities Task Force Members**

**FROM: Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro & Legislative Chairman A. Gregg Pulver**

**DATE: November 23, 2018**

**RE: Formation of the Dutchess County Climate Smart Communities Task Force**

The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program creates a network of New York municipalities seeking to increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources, while reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and increasing communities' resiliency to impacts of climate change. Dutchess County leaders, the County Executive and the Chairman of the Legislature, have determined that involvement in these programs can help reduce overall energy usage and its associated costs and increase the use of renewable energy sources, both in government facilities and the community at large. The program also provides guidance to local governments on best practices for mitigating and adapting to climate change and offers a source of matching grants for projects that advance stated goals. The Dutchess County Department of Planning is charged with securing such grants.

In July 2017, the County Legislature requested the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council (DCEMC) provide recommendations on actions that the County can take to reduce fossil fuel usage, both within County Government and encouraged in the County at large, and to recommend fossil fuel reduction goals. In its report to the Legislature, the EMC recommended pursuing certification in the CSC program and a related Clean Energy Communities (CEC) program, sponsored by NYSERDA.

Since the Climate Smart Community Pledge has been adopted and filed with the appropriate State agencies, the next mandatory step in becoming a CSC is to name a Task Force and Coordinators to shepherd the County through the certification process. The County has carefully considered the advice provided by the CSC website in putting forth a framework and the naming of Task Force members and Coordinators for inclusion in this effort. In doing so, we were mindful that the CSC program is designed to encourage both climate smart actions on behalf of the municipal governments and the community at large. Given this dichotomy, we have named Co-coordinators to lead this effort: Steve MacAvery (Chairman of the DCEMC) and Brad Barclay (DC Dept. of Planning and Development's Environmental Planner). For the DC CSC Task Force members, we have included individuals that represent different segments of the community, focusing on those entities and individuals that have leadership positions or are in innovative fields that are leading current efforts to undertake Climate Smart actions. These individuals represent a diverse and talented collection of people committed to reducing the County's overall energy usage, greening its supply and making it more resilient to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

The CSC Task Force will review the elements of the Climate Smart Communities program intending to have Dutchess County certified as a certified Bronze Level CSC within 12-18 months. The Task Force will be responsible for gathering the necessary data, conducting any required studies and submitting documentation to the NYSCSC program through its online portal.

The Task Force will submit recommendations and the necessary justification to the Administration and the Leadership of the County Legislature for official adoption and report the results to the CSC program. The Task Force will review available grant opportunities offered by the involved programs both to advance the certification process, fund necessary studies and inform municipal governments on the availability of grants for funding specific related projects.

Open quarterly meetings will be conducted, and the Task Force will work with the myriad of other County and regional agencies and non-profit groups to seek out the best and most innovative ways to advance this agenda. It will also use this network to help educate the public and inform other municipal governments of actions that they can take to help meet the programs' stated goals. The first public meeting of the DC Climate Smart Community Task Force is currently being scheduled for mid-December. Public notice of the meeting will be provided when details are available.

The knowledge and dedication of the individuals on this Task Force and the resources of the organizations that they represent are key to the success of this undertaking. There is much that we can learn from each other and this is also a fantastic opportunity to show the community-at-large all that is already being done on the County and Municipal level to address these issues.