



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HDFC CO-OP RESIDENTS COMMIT TO CLIMATE ACTION

Contact: Clara Weinstein, Communications
UHAB | Urban Homesteading Assistance Board
212 479 3337 | weinstein@uhab.org
www.uhab.org

New York, New York, April 27, 2022 – Residents of eight (8) affordable housing co-ops have signed onto the Climate Action Pledge, symbolizing the tenacity of New Yorkers on the frontlines of climate change who are taking steps to prevent climate catastrophe.

Housing co-op residents gathered in Harlem on Wednesday to highlight their commitment to affordability and sustainability. As the City strives to meet its climate goals and affordable housing residents struggle to finance the energy reduction upgrades their buildings need, this gathering recognizes New Yorkers who are leading the way to a more sustainable future.

This unique type of affordable housing, known as Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC) cooperatives, is a type of democratically-controlled, resident-operated housing with a mission to house low-income individuals and families. There are over 30,000 New Yorkers living in HDFC co-ops around New York City in over 1,200 buildings. Concern about climate change and the community is aligned with the principles on which these co-ops operate; they strive to be permanently affordable for the benefit of their neighborhoods and future generations. HDFCs house many low-income families and people of color who face some of the worst impacts of climate change, but as homeowners, have the power to make decisions about energy use in their buildings.

New York City has set ambitious climate goals with the Climate Mobilization Act of 2019 to achieve a 70% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. These affordable co-ops are proving the willingness of those on the frontlines of climate change to improve their housing, even as real estate lobbies and limited funding sources challenge the implementation power of Local Law 97.

The Climate Action Pledge and its accompanying Resource Guidebook was produced by Co-ops Go Solar, a joint campaign of UHAB and Solar One which increases access to solar power and other renewable technologies for New York's affordable housing community. The Climate Action Pledge encourages HDFC co-ops to set and track their own climate goals, and highlights actions ranging from upgrading their building systems to be more energy efficient to fighting food insecurity through maintaining community fridges. Once an HDFC co-op signs the pledge, they connect to a network of climate leaders and free technical assistance from UHAB and Solar One to achieve their goals.

Godfrey Hibbert, an HDFC president, explains that his building signed the pledge “because our co-op has already started a lot of these processes to make our building more energy efficient. We've been tackling this on multiple fronts, whether it be solar panels, heat pumps or LED lighting.” He adds that “seeing that other co-ops are serious about tackling climate change might push other buildings to start moving.”



Amayra Alvarez, secretary of an HDFC in the Bronx, says the Climate Action Pledge is “like a roadmap as far as things we can do to make our building more energy efficient.”

Lawrence Haseley, Program Manager at Solar One, states: “We’ve been helping HDFC’s for years to install solar and have learned how strongly committed they are to take on projects that make their building and community more resilient in the face of climate change and rising energy costs. The release of the Climate Action Pledge and Guidebook is an important step forward in raising awareness of the resources available to HDFCs, and also doubles as a tool to help advance discussions that will be needed if we’re going to reduce our carbon consumption and combat climate change at the neighborhood and city level.”

Lucia Santacruz, Climate and Resiliency Project Associate at UHAB, says “HDFCs have been taking initiative and doing great work in terms of becoming more sustainable, affordable, and energy efficient. Still, building owners face many challenges to doing that work, and sometimes have to focus on more immediate structural repairs like roof work in order to enable larger energy conservation projects like installing solar and heat pumps; the problem they face here is a lack of funding for the work that’s needed. I’m very excited that these buildings are getting recognition for their hard work and getting to see how they can create a more sustainable, carbon free city.

About UHAB:

UHAB is a nonprofit whose mission is to stabilize and expand resident-controlled housing across New York City. Since 1973, UHAB has empowered low- to moderate-income residents to take control of their housing and enhance communities by creating strong tenant associations and lasting affordable co-ops.

About Solar One:

Solar One is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization whose mission is to design and deliver innovative education, training, and technical assistance that fosters sustainability and resiliency in diverse urban environments. We empower learning that changes the way people think about energy, sustainability, and resilience by engaging and educating a diverse set of stakeholders and beneficiaries. Our programs help individuals and communities explore new ways of living and working that are more adaptive to a changing world.

Contact: Clara Weinstein, Communications
UHAB | Urban Homesteading Assistance Board
212 479 3337 | weinstein@uhab.org
www.uhab.org

#####