

# *Fix issues in state's climate, opioid funds*

ROB KENT

I read with great interest about the establishment of a new Climate Change Superfund (Climate Fund) in New York. The fund will be made up of monies paid by polluters for the impact of their work on the climate of the state.

This concept is very similar to the Opioid Stewardship Fund (Opioid Fund), established in 2018. New York demanded that opioid manufacturers and distributors pay assessments to address the impact of their work on the opioid epidemic that has ravaged the state.

While I support holding companies accountable for their im-

pact of the health and wellness of New Yorkers, the approach taken in the Climate Fund differs from that with the Opioid Fund, and the differences should be fixed.

The Climate Fund is a law and the Opioid Fund sunsets in 2029. If a law intended to protect New Yorkers from the impact of climate change is permanent, then a law protecting them from highly addictive opioids should never sunset.

The Climate Fund requires specific and targeted programmatic investments of the funds; the Opioid Fund should be aligned to require specific targeted, programmatic investments. I suggest that funds be invested to increase recovery

services and supports, prevention efforts and in a workforce plan.

Finally, the Climate Fund requires the use of monies to make new investments and not to replace current state spending; no similar provisions are contained in the Opioid Fund meaning that those funds can be, and likely have been, used to replace current state spending. Both funds should only be used to do more and not to support work being done.

Regarding both funds, the state should be required to set up publicly available webpages that simply and specifically show how much money is available and how it is being used.

While state leaders are working to create consistency in these impact funds; they should also target any new revenue generated from their determined efforts to increase access to alcohol, through cocktails-to-go and home delivery, to address the associated increase in the need for treatment for alcoholism. More people die from alcohol than opioids every year and it is still the main reason that individuals seek treatment.

Again, while I support such funds, they must be used to fix problems.

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