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THE TRUST FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND ANNOUNCES COHORT OF SIX TEAMS TO PILOT PROJECTS THROUGH INAUGURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS CHALLENGE

Six NYC-based innovators to pilot water-based climate solutions on Governors Island beginning in summer 2024

Winners include early-stage startups, small businesses, and nonprofits working on living shorelines, greywater treatment, water quality monitoring, and ocean agriculture

NEW YORK, NY (March 11, 2024) – The Trust for Governors Island announced today the winners of the inaugural Climate Solutions Challenge, presented through its Living Lab program. Through this initiative, the Trust makes the Island available as a site for local small businesses, entrepreneurs, and nonprofits to test and demonstrate urban climate solutions for cities and their diverse communities.

Dubbed the “Water Abundance Challenge,” this initial call for proposals sought projects that utilize water to help power climate solutions that grow blue and green jobs and create healthier communities. Each of the six New York City-based innovators will receive a site to demonstrate their projects, grant awards of up to \$25,000, and access to a common pool of additional funds to support pilot implementation. Their pilot sites will also provide valuable opportunities to engage with the Island’s rapidly growing audience of nearly one million annual visitors through public demonstrations, workshops, training opportunities, and other initiatives.

"Where some people see challenges, New Yorkers see opportunities, and Governors Island's 'Climate Solutions Challenge' is the perfect example of how New Yorkers' creativity and ingenuity will continue to shape our world," said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. "By giving these climate solutions a chance to pilot, we will continue to grow New York City's green economy, address climate change, and begin to create the good-paying, accessible 'green-collar' jobs of the future."

"Building on the recently announced Green Economy Action Plan and the creation of the New York Climate Exchange on Governors Island, I am excited by today's announcement and the selection of six organizations to participate in the inaugural Climate Solutions Challenge," said **Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic, and Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer**. "New York City is and will continue to be a leader in the green economy by enabling pilot programs -- like Governors Island Living Lab -- to test high-impact climate tech, advancing world-class research and development, and implementing strategies that create both equity and economic value through green collar jobs."

"Governors Island is the perfect place to test and showcase climate projects that will create a more sustainable and equitable city for all, and we are thrilled to be able to offer a totally unique

environment to these six teams,” said **Clare Newman, President and CEO of the Trust for Governors Island**. “The Water Abundance Challenge winners represent innovative water-based solutions being developed by New Yorkers, for New Yorkers, and we cannot wait for them to share their work with Governors Island’s engaged—and growing—annual audience of nearly one million people.”

“We are thrilled to support these innovators and to shine a light on how climate solutions move from concept to prototyping to a scalable product,” said **Lauren Wang, Director of Climate Programs at the Trust for Governors Island**. “These founders and nonprofit leaders are working creatively and thoughtfully every day to improve the city’s relationship with water. We are looking forward to all New Yorker joining us on the Island this summer for demonstrations and workshops led by these teams.”

“Governors Island is more than a special place in New York City. Now, it’s becoming a symbol of our values and an incubator for climate solutions aimed at solving the globe’s most pressing challenge. At a time when the impacts of the climate crisis grow more apparent, the innovative pilot projects that will soon launch on the Island will undoubtedly move New York – and the world – forward as we work to make our city the epicenter of action,” said **Dr. Stephen Hammer, CEO of The New York Climate Exchange**. “The Exchange could not be more proud to call Governors Island home, greatly values our partnership, and looks forward to working with partners across the five boroughs to address the climate crisis.”

“To address the climate challenges of the future, we must invest today in a diverse group of innovators working on new projects and technologies that will protect New York City’s ecosystem,” said **Abby Jo Sigal, Executive Director of the NYC Mayor’s Office of Talent and Workforce Development**. “The six winners of the Climate Solutions Challenge are just the ones we need to safeguard our waterways and harbors. They will also create well-paying green collar jobs, which is key to making our City more resilient, not just environmentally but also economically, for all New Yorkers.”

This cohort of pilot projects includes:

- **Duro UAS** – A South Bronx-based company with the goal of improving how environmental data is collected and shared through advanced, affordable, and easy-to-use water monitoring systems and data services. On Governors Island, they will pilot their **Nearshore Sonde**, a portable water monitoring device and cloud-based data dashboard.
- **Just EcoCities** – An environmental and ecological design firm that is working to improve water quality, expand wetland habitats, and promote community engagement with New York City’s waterways. On Governors Island, they will partner with **Biohabitats**, an ecological design firm whose mission is to restore the Earth and inspire ecological stewardship, to pilot a **Tidal Planter** that creates salt marsh while removing pollutants from New York Harbor.
- **LÆRO** – A small business founded in collaboration with experts across fields of water advocacy, manufacturing, and electromechanical engineering, working to reduce the

levels of untreated wastewater that enter New York City's waterways. On Governors Island, they will pilot **Cycleau**, their compact greywater treatment system at water refill stations and restrooms.

- **Object Territories** – A critical design practice based in New York and Hong Kong that works at the intersection of architecture, landscape, and urbanism. Their pilot on Governors Island will test their **Intertidal Objects**, habitat-friendly coastal protection units designed in collaboration with the Center for Architecture, Science, and Ecology (CASE) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, after NATURE, and Fort Miller Group.
- **RETI Center** – A Red Hook-based nonprofit that works to educate, train, and work with local youth, experts, professionals, and community members to transform our coastal city from one that is driven by fossil fuels to one balancing equity, ecology, and economy. On Governors Island, they will pilot their **Floating BlueBlocks Gardens**, integrated ecological systems that can be installed in any body of water, in collaboration with thread collective.
- **Seaweed City** – A nonprofit citizen science initiative exploring the benefits of seaweed aquaculture in New York City's waterways. On Governors Island, they will pilot their **urban kelp farming infrastructure**. The project is fiscally sponsored by Newtown Creek Alliance.

Of the selected pilots, 100 percent are locally based, 50 percent are women-led, and 33 percent are minority-led. Pilots will be installed on Governors Island over the coming months for periods spanning six to 18 months, with an inaugural public Demo Day to be held in early summer 2024. They will join ongoing piloting projects led by **Vycarb**, a Brooklyn-based company working to measure and mitigate carbon dioxide in New York Harbor; **Circular Economy Manufacturing**, a Brooklyn-based company that transforms post-consumer plastics into upcycled products through scalable solar-powered technology; and **South Bronx Unite**, a Bronx-based community organization that is piloting a street-level air quality monitoring network. For more information on the pilots, visit www.govisland.org/living-lab.

The Climate Solutions Piloting Program is a key component of Pilot:NYC, an initiative announced by Governor Kathy Hochul and Mayor Eric Adams as part of the “New” New York Plan that seeks to make New York City a hub for urban innovation. The Piloting Program includes two components: the themed annual Climate Solutions Challenge and a general rolling call. Through the annual challenge, a selected cohort of companies receives piloting project sites, grant awards, deployment support, and public engagement opportunities. The Trust also offers a year-round general application for self-funded piloting proposals across all disciplines. Non-profit organizations, entrepreneurs, and start-ups are invited to apply to the general rolling call at any time at www.govisland.org/challenge.

The pilots announced today will complement an existing group of businesses and nonprofit organizations that are currently showcasing innovative climate solutions on Governors Island, including Con Edison, GrowNYC, Earth Matter NY, the Bee Conservancy, Billion Oyster Project, and others.

“Duro is thrilled to partner with Governors Island to launch the first IoT (Internet of Things) water monitoring network in New York Harbor. This exciting initiative, featuring a public data dashboard and workshop series, will generate unprecedented insight into the Harbor ecosystem, strengthen the existing body of research, support the growth of keystone species, and much more,” said **Brian Wilson and Gabriel Foreman, CEO and Vice President, respectively, at Duro UAS.**

“Just Ecocities is thrilled to partner with Biohabitats to pilot a Tidal Planter climate solution on Governors Island. The Tidal Planter will improve water quality and expand salt marsh habitat, with a modular design that can be adapted for waterways throughout the region. We look forward to engaging with youth and community groups in monitoring and maintenance of the planter, building local capacity and training the climate workforce of the future,” said **Jamie Ong, Founding Principal of Just Ecocities.**

“We’re excited to show the possibilities of diversifying greywater treatment across New York City, and to piloting a scalable solution capable of restoring access to safe waterfronts in some of New York’s most underserved neighborhoods,” said **Noemi Florea, founder and director of LÆRO.**

“RETI Center is proud and excited to launch our Floating BlueBlocks Gardens at Governors Island. We see the creation of natural habitats and support of biodiversity as a crucial element in climate adaptation. All visitors to the Island, no matter their age or experience level, are welcome to come help us build and launch our gardens this summer,” said **Tim Gilman-Sevcik, Executive Director of RETI Center.**

“Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation is a proud supporter of the Governors Island Living Lab and congratulates the winners of the inaugural Climate Solutions Challenge. We are excited by the possibilities of these pilot projects and the positive impact they can bring to New York City’s vulnerable communities and beyond,” said **Lisa Talma, Vice President of Philanthropic Initiatives in the Community Development Finance Group at Deutsche Bank.**

“As a strong partner in ushering our state's clean energy transition, we're proud to support The Trust for Governors Island's unique Climate Solutions Challenge initiative that places New York City at the forefront of cutting-edge research tackling the greatest challenges posed by climate change,” said **Tim Cawley, Chairman and CEO of Con Edison.** “These innovative projects will pave the way for a more sustainable future for our city while boosting green jobs, economic growth, and healthier communities.”

“As we continue to work to close the racial wealth gap and address other disparities that affect New York’s underserved neighborhoods, we must not ignore the role climate issues can play in exacerbating these inequalities through the ways they disproportionately harm communities of color,” said **Valerie White, Senior Executive Director of LISC NY.** “Programs like the Climate Solutions Challenge on Governors Island not only encourage innovation that can provide tangible community-centric climate initiatives but also offer diversely owned start-ups

access to key resources that will enable success. We look forward to seeing the water-based solutions this cohort creates and the ways their work will ultimately benefit New Yorkers.”

“The New York Community Trust is proud to support Governors Island’s evolution into a hub for practical, innovative solutions to the challenges presented by accelerating climate change. From improving data collection to experimenting with seaweed aquaculture in New York City’s waterways, the variety and ingenuity of these projects gives me hope,” said **Arturo Garcia-Costas, Senior Program Officer, Local, National and International Environment, The New York Community Trust.**

“At Amazon, we’re actively working to reduce emissions to reach net zero carbon by 2040, and are excited to continue our partnership with Governors Island to showcase what sustainable and resilient cities can look like. The emerging businesses announced today are demonstrating innovative approaches to tackling the global climate crisis that are poised to scale, and we’re proud to support their work as part of the Climate Solutions challenge,” said **Carley Graham Garcia, Head of Community Affairs and Public Policy, Amazon New York.**

Today’s announcement marks an exciting step forward in Governors Island’s growth as a resource for climate demonstration and innovation. Announced in June 2023, the Living Lab is a new program led by the Trust that provides a platform for partnerships and programs to amplify climate action. In addition to the Climate Solutions Piloting Program, the Living Lab includes a climate field trip program launching this spring and a community convening space for climate on the Island. The Living Lab is made possible with the generous support of Amazon, Con Edison, Deutsche Bank, Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, LISC, and the New York Community Trust.

The New York Climate Exchange, a research and educational institution led by Stony Brook University and a cross-sector consortium of universities, businesses, and nonprofit organizations, was announced as the anchor partner for the Center for Climate Solutions by Mayor Eric Adams and the Trust for Governors Island in April 2023. The Exchange will create a state-of-the-art, \$700-million, 400,000-square-foot campus on Governors Island dedicated to researching and developing innovative climate solutions that will be scaled across New York City and the world and that will equip New Yorkers to hold the green jobs of the future. The Exchange will also create thousands of permanent green jobs and generate \$1 billion in fiscal impact for New York City.

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About the Trust for Governors Island

The Trust for Governors Island is the nonprofit corporation created by the City of New York that is responsible for the redevelopment and operation of 150 acres of Governors Island. The Trust’s mission is to realize the full potential of Governors Island for the inspiration and enjoyment of all New Yorkers, demonstrating a bold vision for public space. For more information, visit www.govisland.org

