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**MAYOR DE BLASIO AND THE TRUST FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND ANNOUNCE
GLOBAL COMPETITION TO ESTABLISH LEADING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS
CENTER IN NEW YORK CITY**

Request for Expressions of Interest seeks a partner to anchor climate research, educational hub on iconic island

\$150 million funding commitment available to support capital investments

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and The Trust for Governors Island (the Trust) today launched a global competition to create a climate-focused research and educational hub on Governors Island. The competition invites universities and research institutions to establish an anchor institution for a Climate Solutions Center, dedicated to combatting the climate crisis in the heart of New York City’s harbor. The Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) can be found [here](#).

The Center will capitalize on New York City’s unique talent pool to prepare communities around the world for the impacts of climate change; create good-paying green jobs across the city; and foster public awareness, dialogue, and action to address the global climate crisis.

“Governors Island is a crown jewel of this city – a place where families, workers and students have come to enjoy a beautiful landscape with spectacular views of the greatest city in the world. But we can get more out of this unique space. We can maintain the island’s identity while turning it into a world-class destination for fighting the climate crisis in New York City and across the world. That journey starts today, and I can’t wait to see where it takes us,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“New York City has every asset needed to become the global leader in climate-solutions and adaptation. We have the best talent, most innovative and creative entrepreneurs, and now, we’re offering Governors Island as the ideal location to host this existential work,” said **Deputy Mayor Vicki Been**. “This competition will foster diverse ideas and perspectives on how to create a world-class climate solutions center, and I look forward to seeing institutions from across the globe propose concepts for this once-in-a-generation opportunity.”

“As our city emerges from the COVID-19 crisis, we have a critical opportunity to address the global climate crisis in a way that centers equity, prepares our communities, and involves all New Yorkers in creating solutions,” said **Clare Newman, President and CEO of the Trust for Governors Island**. “Situated at the center of New York Harbor, and at the center of New York City’s global network of talent, institutions, businesses and leaders in climate action, Governors Island offers a visible platform for education, research and public engagement to address one of

the defining challenges of our time. We look forward to working with prospective partners to define this important project for Governors Island, and our city.”

“Just as the United Nations was persuaded to locate its headquarters here three-quarters of a century ago, today marks an important step in bringing a world-class institution to New York City to address the defining issue of our time – climate change,” said **Alicia Glen, Chair of the Trust for Governors Island**. “As we seek to combat the devastating impacts of climate change on our communities, this RFEI acknowledges and builds upon our history as the global center for innovation and progress.”

The RFEI seeks an institution to lease land within 33 acres of development sites, and/or up to one million square feet of adaptive reuse opportunity available within historic buildings on Governors Island. The Trust and the City of New York have partnered to make available up to \$150 million of capital funding that may be allocated to support this project.

“A global competition to create a climate-focused research and educational hub on Governors Island is exactly what this city, state, nation and planet needs. And what better place to save the planet in a speedy, just and equitable way than in the very center of the universe, New York City! We have the human capital; we are a magnet to attract international talent; we have the public systems to support and sustain a vital new institution; and we have the passion to tackle this global challenge in a smart, scientific and progressive way. New York City is the world’s center for so many activities so it is only natural that the Big Apple also become the global center for fighting climate change,” said **Senator Charles Schumer**.

“There is no better place than Governors Island to create a living laboratory focused on climate solutions, research, and education,” said **Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**. “I am excited to see what comes out of this global competition and I look forward to working with the Trust for Governors Island to help realize the full potential for this opportunity. The Climate Solutions Center will help make sure that New York continues to be a leader when it comes to resiliency and tackling the climate crisis.”

“The climate crisis is the most urgent threat facing our world, our country, and our city. Just as New York City leads the way in business, technological advancement, and innovation, we should lead the way in developing solutions to this most existential of challenges,” said **Congressman Jerry Nadler**. “Establishing a world-class institution on Governor’s Island with the specific goal of finding ways to overcome the perils of climate change will bring green jobs to our city, provide meaningful opportunities for education and research, and ensure that any rising tide that lifts all New Yorkers is one we have firmly under our control.”

"As the climate crisis continues to worsen, it has never been more important to develop new and equitable solutions to protect communities from flooding, heatwaves, and other forms of extreme weather," said **Jainey Bavishi, Director of the Mayor's Office of Climate Resiliency**. "New York City is already a global leader in climate adaptation and is advancing some of the most complex resiliency projects anywhere in the world. Creating this new Climate Solutions Center will build on our existing expertise and will help foster research, innovation, and design in an iconic location in the heart of New York Harbor."

"New Yorkers are on the frontline of the climate crisis and will be at the center of equitable climate solutions," said **Ben Furnas, Director of the Mayor's Office of Climate and Sustainability**. "The capital investment and global competition to build a Climate Solutions Center right here on Governors Island will bring together the brightest minds around the city and the world. Together, we'll develop climate research and education that empowers us to take action on climate, while improving daily life and creating a cleaner, healthier, and fairer future for all."

Respondents should articulate a vision that addresses the City's and the Trust's goals as outlined in the RFEI. In addition to advancing climate-related fields, respondents' plans should make a positive contribution to Governors Island's physical campus and existing community of partners and visitors, while creating broader opportunities for New Yorkers who already enjoy the island. Responses to this RFEI are due on September 29, 2021.

A center for climate solutions on Governors Island is projected to create over 7,000 direct new jobs and nearly \$1 billion in economic impact for New York City, both on Governors Island alone.

"I'm happy that the Trust for Governors Island is conducting a RFEI process for the planned climate research center on the island." said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "Community input and public engagement in this selection process will help ensure that the Center will be occupied by the organization that is not only best suited to address the climate crisis, but also responds to the community's needs."

"Governors Island has a long and storied past and I am pleased that the next chapter will include a center for innovative work on one of the great challenges of our time, climate change," said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**. "As the RFEI process moves forward, it will be important to ensure that the applicant selected and the proposed development align with the values of the community and all New Yorkers who treasure Governors Island as a green, public open space. We also look forward to ongoing support for the essential work of the environmental and educational organizations already on the Island, including the Billion Oyster Project, Harbor School, and Earth Matters. I am excited to continue to work with the Trust for Governors Island, my colleagues in elected office, our Community Boards in Manhattan and Brooklyn, and the many New Yorkers who care deeply for the Island."

"Rising tides are an immediate threat to New York City, and our coastline communities are depending on us for solutions to our climate crisis. This Climate Solutions Center is an opportunity to address global warming and bring a world-class institution to Governors Island," said **Council Member Margaret Chin**. "I am so proud to have worked with the Trust for Governor's Island to get us to this next phase, and I am thrilled that the Climate Solutions Center is one step closer to being fully actualized."

"Cities cannot address climate change without ensuring that environmental justice is embedded into our decision-making, policies, and solutions," said **Lisa Garcia, Director of FIX, Grist's Climate Solutions Lab and member of the Trust for Governors Island's Board of Directors**.

“Governors Island is an inspiring example of a place that offers unparalleled opportunities for public engagement in climate action, and for collaboration and co-creation of equitable solutions with leaders in frontline communities, which is what makes it such a compelling place for a Climate Solutions Center.”

“As the impact of climate change on our communities accelerates, we must focus on adapting our urban environments and enhancing resiliency in addition to sharply curtailing carbon emissions,” said **Michael Oppenheimer, Albert G. Milbank Professor of Geosciences and International Affairs in the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA), the Department of Geosciences, and the High Meadows Environmental Institute at Princeton University and member of the Trust for Governors Island’s Board of Directors.** “The vision for the Center for Climate Solutions comes at a time when the need for a cross-disciplinary approach to research, education, and community engagement could not be more urgent. I applaud the City for providing the space, vision, and financing to create a first of its kind center dedicated to advancing climate science, climate solutions, and climate policy”.

“Over the past 19 years, Governors Island has been transformed from an abandoned Coast Guard Base into a magnificent urban park drawing one million visitors each year,” said **Tom Wright, President and CEO, Regional Plan Association.** “Such vision was championed by a broad alliance of organizations when we began this journey. Now the Governors Island Trust has demonstrated its ability to execute and improve upon that vision. Today’s announcement will help secure the right partners to create a collaborative research platform and advance climate change solutions for the region and beyond.”

“Governors Island is the perfect New York City location for a research center tasked with tackling one of the world's greatest crisis,” said **Alliance for Downtown New York President Jessica Lappin.** “This program will give our city and its inhabitants an incredible opportunity to contribute directly to solutions for our global community.”

“New York City’s waterfronts are core to the City’s economic recovery and to climate change adaptation. We commend The Trust for Governors Island for the Climate Solutions Center proposal which can bring solutions to the climate crisis and make for a more livable and greener city,” said **Cortney Koenig-Worrall, CEO and President, Waterfront Alliance.** “We also look forward to a future of expanded ferry service at Governors Island, commitments to a net-zero carbon island, investment in new dock and boating infrastructure, and local green and blue job creation. New opportunities for people to touch the water and enjoy recreational boating will also meet increased demand for recreation in the City.”

“The Association for a Better New York (ABNY) is pleased to see this RFEI move forward. Establishing a world-class climate center on Governors Island presents an opportunity for renewal in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and pursues solutions for the devastation of another extreme threat to humanity, and specifically, to our most vulnerable populations: climate change,” said **Melva M. Miller, Chief Executive Officer, Association for a Better New York.** “By incorporating existing community partners and visitors into the RFEI's requirements alongside broader goals for research, education, and economic development, the City and the

Trust show commitment to advancing positive economic and social outcomes for all New Yorkers."

"Climate change is one of the most persistent and critical challenges our Earth faces today, and we cannot afford to wait another second to turn the tide," said **Dr. Dune Ives, sustainability expert, CEO of ocean conservation nonprofit, Lonely Whale, and co-founding partner of Ocean Heroes Network**. "The cross-sectoral living platform of The Center for Climate Solutions on Governors Island would sustain not just our future, but my son's future, all of our children's future, and everyone and every living thing in between. Now more than ever, the voices of youth are influencing global culture, and it is on all of us to answer their call by driving forward global action and awareness."

"The Urban Assembly New York Harbor School, that inhabits this awe-inspiring island, will be further supported by a Climate Solution Center by enhancing our abilities to provide exceptional, hands-on Maritime Education curriculum to our diverse student population. Our school's unique Career and Technical Education programming, which strives to break down barriers for young people entering into the Maritime Industry, will be strengthened by providing NYC students the opportunity to engage with the university and/or research center that will occupy this proposed Center," said **Jeffrey Chetirko, Principal of the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School on Governors Island**. "It is clear that the development on Governors Island aligns with our school's mission in educating our city's citizens about climate change. This awareness of, and movement toward, climate solutions allows us to continue our environmental restoration work all around the New York Harbor with our students and staff alongside the Billion Oyster Project."

"This initiative represents an extraordinary opportunity for global climate leadership with a focus on equity, community, and civic action--a necessary scale-out of the meaningful work the Trust for Governors Island has already been doing," said **Miranda Massie, Director of the Climate Museum**. "We're prouder than ever to be part of the cultural ecosystem the Trust has created, and very excited for all that's to come."

"The National Park Service is proud to welcome visitors to the Governors Island National Monument to explore Governors Island's rich history each year," said **Shirley McKinney, Manhattan Sites Superintendent for the National Park Service**. "We share the Trust for Governors Island's mission in expanding access to this jewel of New York Harbor, and are thrilled that the City of New York is further investing in this remarkable place."

"The proposed Center for Climate Solutions represents the culmination of communal efforts we helped initiate 25 years ago to turn an abandoned military base into a vibrant public resource," said **Merritt Birnbaum, Executive Director of the Friends of Governors Island**. "We commend the Trust for Governors Island and the City for the work they've already accomplished in creating an extraordinary park and public destination – and for this game-changing next step. Beyond its envisioned contributions to the climate field, the Center will bring huge advantages for everyday New Yorkers, including increased public access, more weekday amenities, new long-term uses for historic buildings and a continued focus on learning, innovation, sustainability and public engagement."

“For over a decade, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) has served artists and the public at our Arts Center at Governors Island through dynamic programming that encourages creative and critical inquiry around issues of ecology, sustainability, and social practice. A Climate Solutions Center will offer rich opportunities for LMCC and the Island’s cultural and environmental organizations to collaborate on groundbreaking ideas and cross-disciplinary projects, all while driven by our shared commitment to equity and civic participation,” said **Lili Chopra, Executive Director, Artistic Programs, and Diego S. Segalini, Executive Director, Finance & Administration, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC).**

About The Trust for Governors Island

The Trust for Governors Island is the non-profit 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.