

Bill of Rights for Land and Soil Security in New York City



**Center for
Land and Soil Security**
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Every New Yorker has the right to live, work and play on land and soil that is safe from exposure to legacy pollution--pollution from earlier periods of urban land use that occurred with little or no environmental regulation. To achieve this goal, the Center for Land and Soil Security (CLASS) has established a land pollution **Bill of Rights** for New Yorkers with 16 rights in five central themes. These are the goals that CLASS is working to achieve.

Public Policy

New Yorkers have the right to strong government policy to assure land and soil security

1. A unified, city-wide policy for land and soil security that manages legacy pollution and is publicly-vetted and published
2. A clearly defined government chain of command to provide accountable leadership to implement city-wide policy on land and soil security
3. Incorporation of land and soil security into all aspects of city planning, including planning and initiatives for land use, zoning, building, sustainability and climate resilience
4. Communication to the public of all government pollution management policies and activities through easily accessible public portals and databases

Investigation

New Yorkers have the right to thorough scientific investigation to understand legacy pollution and identify ongoing pathways for potential human exposure to pollution

5. Comprehensive investigation of historic pollution disposal and an inventory of historic pollution disposal sites that is accessible to the public
6. Soil quality sampling programs for public spaces and childhood play areas including parks, playgrounds and day care centers with all sampling results readily accessible to the public
7. Human health exposure investigations that identify and report on the most significant pollutant exposure pathways, especially for children

Remediation

New Yorkers have the right to programs that remediate legacy pollution and eliminate potential pathways for human exposure to pollution

8. Practical and immediate steps to lower the risk for the most serious exposures to legacy pollution and a long-term plan to permanently address these exposures. Targeted programs to identify and remediate childhood soil pollution exposure and a published priority list and schedule for expedited study and remedial programs
9. A mandatory set of best management practices for pollution exposure reduction that must be utilized by public agencies and the private sector during development and maintenance of polluted land that includes requirements for professional oversight and certification of ground intrusive work, enforceable standards to ensure compliance and mandatory controls for dust control and offsite pollutant migration
10. Public representation on a task force to establish best management practices for pollutant exposure reduction
11. Formal programs for permanent management of pollutants on land that cannot be removed, including recognition of pollutants in property deeds and requirements for periodic inspection, maintenance and reporting

Communication

New Yorkers have the right to receive effective communication of government policies, resources and programs for land and soil security

12. A centralized land and soil security database for easy public access to all environmental data on land quality
13. Mandatory reporting of environmental data by government agencies and the private sector, including soil, groundwater and soil vapor quality, the presence of buried waste materials and other pollutants, and boring logs of geology and assembly of this information into publicly available databases
14. Community education on techniques to minimize pollution exposure in homes and backyards

Resources

New Yorkers have the right to useful resources to help improve quality of soil in backyards and community gardens

15. Programs to retain and distribute clean recyclable materials, such as excavated clean soil and organic compost, to cover polluted soil, reduce pollution
16. Public access to government contracts and contractors for land remediation in residential areas and funding to lower costs for soil quality sampling and soil remediation