

Penta Policy Insiders

New York Insights Review

Environment and Climate

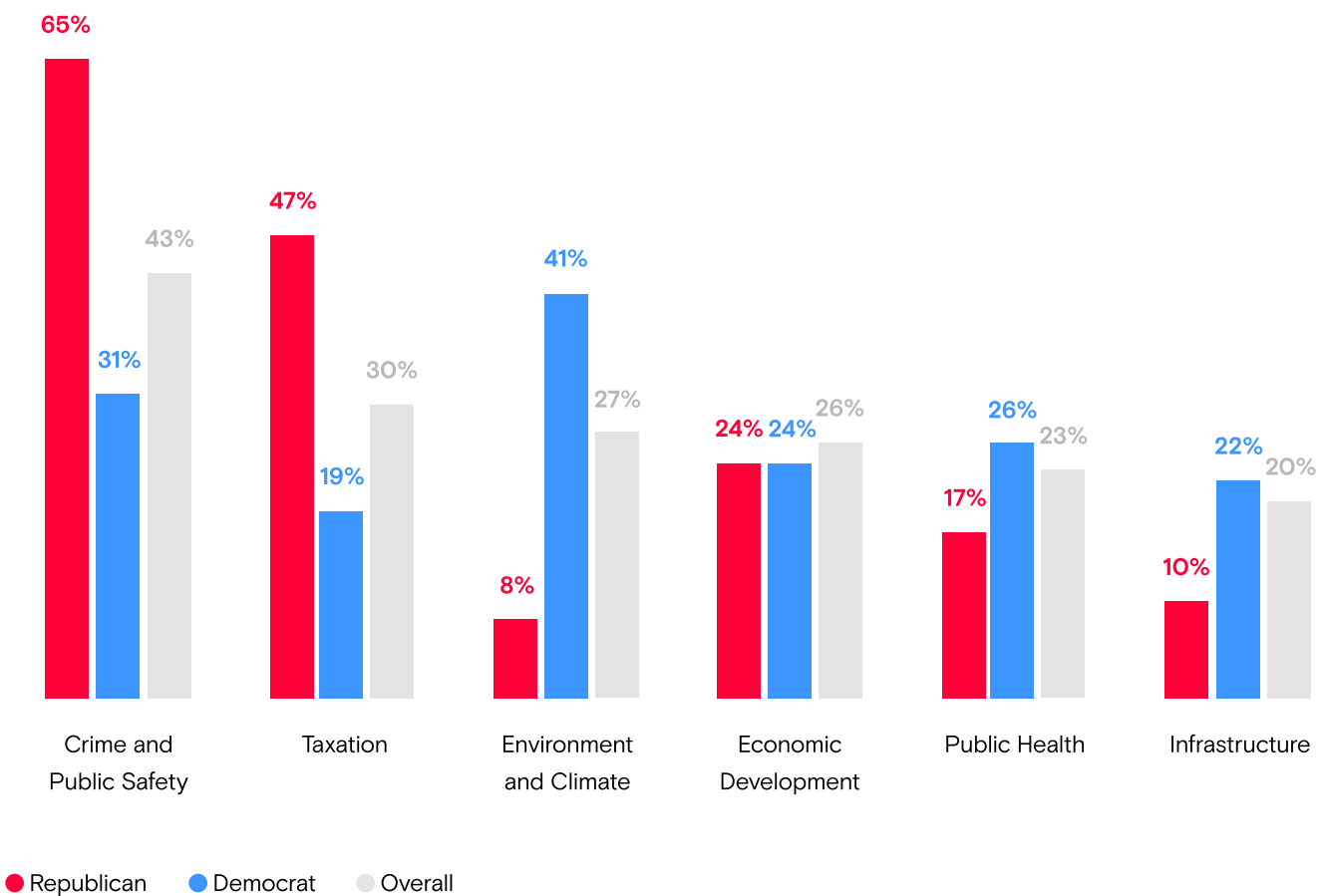
Executive summary

We are delighted to share our findings from this year's New York Insights Review. From September to December 2022, we surveyed and spoke with over 230 state and local policymakers in New York to understand their main policy priorities and key concerns.

Public safety rose to the top of New York policy leader priorities, with nearly half ranking it as a top issue. In 2022, crime in the state was up by 22 percent. While trends show a decline in percentage of major crimes this year, policy staff say public safety is nevertheless a top issue for the communities they serve.¹ Policymakers also cite environmental and climate issues as key priorities for the state, with more than a quarter selecting it as at top challenge. Our research also finds that economic development is a primary concern for policymakers, with policy staff citing taxation and inflation as hurdles to growth for the state.

This report is the third in a series that examines three of New York policymakers' top policy priorities, which include (i) Crime and Public Safety (ii) Environment and Climate (iii) and (iv) Economic Development.

Top policy priorities in New York

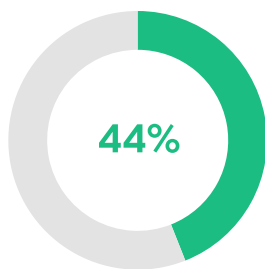


New York deep dive

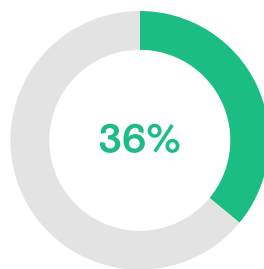
Environment and climate

Almost a third of New York policymakers - 27 percent - reported environment and climate to be top policy priority in the last year. Policy leaders specifically identify waste disposal as one of the leading challenges, while also acknowledging additional issues such as pollution, natural disasters, and climate shifts. In fact, policymakers have been so focused on environmental concerns in New York that the state enacted a Green Amendment in 2021, which guarantees all residents the “right to clean air and water, and a healthful environment.”² Moreover, New York has also recently received funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help address pollution in the region, further highlighting legislators' commitment to addressing these issues.

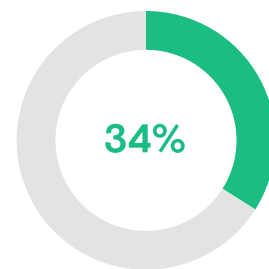
Top environmental issues in the state



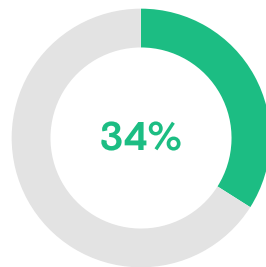
Water disposal



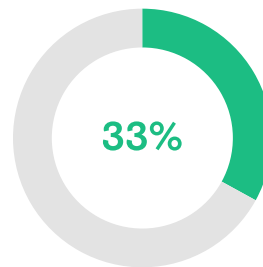
Extreme climate shifts



Air pollution



Natural disasters



Water pollution

Pollution

Policymakers believe one of the biggest environmental concerns in New York is pollution, specifically when it comes to air and water. The issue is believed to be exacerbated by improper waste disposal, and policymakers are concerned that manufacturers may not always follow proper protocol when disposing of waste and toxic materials.³ In an effort to address such issues, in February 2023, the EPA granted almost \$84 million to help New York mitigate pollution and rid the water of contaminants. Overall, policymakers want to limit pollution and make sure they are monitoring the quality of air and water.



[With manufacturing] there's always an impact on our waterways and impact on our air. You have concerns when businesses take over old buildings. There's always environmental concerns and concerns about the impact of the industry on surrounding residential areas.

Senior Attorney, New York Executive Branch, R

Exploring renewables

Another key concern for policymakers pertains to the potential environmental and climate impacts of energy allocation. Policymakers report that they are open to various sources of renewable energy, but want to explore how different options might impact the environment.

The right to clean air and water

In November of 2021, voters in New York passed the Green Amendment, which was added to the official state constitution and secures every person's "right to clean air and water, and a healthful environment."² However, policymakers note that the interpretation of this amendment is still being determined by the courts.



While we have days when the winds blow 40 miles an hour, we have days or multiple days at a time when the winds don't blow it all. So your wind turbines don't work. That means you need battery technology, and we simply don't have it... Current technology solar panels are good for about 10 years... **We have no infrastructure to deal with those panels when they cease being productive and they're full of all sorts of toxic metals that you don't want to be just burying in a landfill.**

County Legislator, New York Municipality, R



We just passed a constitutional amendment this past fall that puts in our state constitution the right to clean air, clean water, those kinds of issues... There's been court cases filed about implementation of that and court's interpretation of siting of landfills and things like that now take on a whole different lens. So yeah, there will continue to be a huge focus on environmental issues at our state capital.

Legislative Director, New York State Legislature, D

Conclusion

Policymakers are concerned about a number of environmental issues in New York, with a specific focus on the impact of pollution in the air and water. Policymakers have been working to address these challenges through new legislation such as the Green Amendment and are focused on promoting a healthy environment.

About Penta Policy Insiders

Penta Policy Insiders provides direct feedback from policymakers to government relations professionals, improving advocates' ability to understand, validate, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their engagement.

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Senior Content Associate
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Citations

1. <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2023/03/03/nypd-february-2023-crime-statistics>
2. <https://nygreenamendment.org/act-now/>

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