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Town and Village of Hamilton
Certified as 'Climate Smart'

New York State has designated the Town of Hamilton and Village of Hamilton "Climate Smart Communities," recognizing their documented efforts to address the effects of climate change on Hamilton.

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced in late May that the village and town are the latest of 51 municipalities statewide to meet the standards for climate-smart certification by detailing measures they have put in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build local climate resilience.

The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program was launched in 2009, sponsored by seven state agencies and administered by the DEC.

To earn certification, a municipality begins by pledging to incorporate ten elements in its climate action plan, elements such as developing an inventory of energy emissions; decreasing energy use and shifting to renewable energy; committing to climate-smart land use and materials management; informing and inspiring the public to build climate resilience; and supporting green innovation. How the municipality addresses those goals is described in its application for CSC status. Full details of the village and town applications are available on the state's climate-smart website: https://climatesmart.ny.gov/ Applications are rigorously reviewed by a state committee.

The village and town began working actively toward certification in 2016 under the auspices of the Hamilton Climate Preparedness Working Group (HCPWG), a group originally organized by John Pumilio, Colgate's director of sustainability, and Chris Henke, then faculty director of the University's Upstate Institute. A representative group of community residents and elected officials, along with Colgate students and faculty, works to pursue their common goal of building community climate resiliency and sustainability.

Both Town of Hamilton Supervisor Eve Ann Shwartz and Hamilton Mayor RuthAnn Loveless meet regularly with HCPWG. The group has also sponsored public information meetings and a climate resilience workshop.

Early on, Chris Rossi (at the time an elected member of the Town Council) was named to coordinate the town's CSC application, while Administrative Assistant Nancy Mitchell was appointed to

coordinate the village application. Students and faculty from Colgate's environmental studies program have been especially helpful in researching and documenting the applications.

Madison County was one of the earliest municipalities to earn Climate Smart certification. County Planner Scott Ingmire and members of his staff have been regular participants with HCPWG. Central NY Regional Planning and Development Board staff Chris Carrick and Amanda Mazzoni provided important assistance along the way. Dazzle Ekblad, who oversees the certification process for the state, also met with HCPWG and advised on the town and village applications.

Mayor Loveless said: "The village has long been committed to climate action that supports our livelihoods and our environment. Positive action is even more important now in light of recent rollbacks of environmental regulations. I'm proud of the effort put forth by the entire village staff to warrant this recognition."

Supervisor Shwartz said: "Town efforts to achieve this important certification are based on our long-term commitment to improving our community's ability to react to an ever-changing climate – protecting our environment while simultaneously saving tax dollars. We are grateful to the many community and university members of HCPWG and to the town employees who work tirelessly to prepare and protect our community."

In addition to recognizing communities for exemplary climate action, the CSC offers grants to support future initiatives. Speaking for HCPWG, Pumilio added: "Certification is an important milestone, but this is a journey of many steps and our work will continue."