



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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New York Lawyers for the Public Interest Announces New Director of Environmental Justice Program

Rachel Spector, former senior staff attorney, promoted to Director of NYLPI's Environmental Justice Program

New York, NY, January 27, 2016 – New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI), a leading civil rights advocacy group for New Yorkers in need, announced that Rachel Spector, who has served in the capacity of Senior Staff Attorney since 2014, today begins her new role as Director of their Environmental Justice Program.

As Director of the Environmental Justice Program, Spector will lead and manage an interdisciplinary staff of attorneys, community organizers, advocates, assistants and interns; guide the program's growth and its involvement in the community; and contribute to furthering NYLPI's mission as a prominent member of its leadership team.

"We're thrilled to see Rachel step into her new role as leader of the Environmental Justice Program," said McGregor Smyth, Executive Director of NYLPI. "Rachel has been instrumental in guiding our program to its current successes. She has proven herself to be an accomplished leader and community lawyer – she continues to build new relationships with new partners, all the while strengthening those already in place and guiding us to help make a positive impact on very real environmental justice challenges facing our community partners around New York City. We are fortunate to have her expertise as a new member of our leadership team."

"I'm excited to take on my new role with NYLPI," said Spector. "One of the key strengths of the Environmental Justice program is that we can serve as 'lawyers on tap' for our community partners, and collaborate with them on creative advocacy to address systemic inequities in and around New York City. In the coming months, I look forward to continuing our core work on waste equity and healthy schools, homes and workplaces, and leading NYLPI into even more involvement with climate justice and resiliency issues."

As a Senior Staff Attorney, Spector was responsible for spearheading NYLPI's involvement in the Healthy Nail Salons coalition, which advocates for healthier working conditions and better pay for the City's nail salon employees. She has also led NYLPI's work with the Fifth Avenue Committee to preserve Thomas Greene Park as part of the Superfund project to clean up the Gowanus Canal. Spector has been active in NYLPI's campaigns to address systemic pollution in New York City's low-income communities of color, using litigation, policy advocacy and agency advocacy to further NYLPI's goals.

Prior to her work in NYLPI's Environmental Justice Program, Spector was a Clinical Teaching Fellow in Fordham Law School's Community Economic Development Clinic, where she led student teams representing cooperatives, community groups, and prominent national workers' rights organizations.

She also advocated on behalf of a group of immigrant small business owners facing displacement by a large development project. Prior to this, as a Senior Staff Attorney at MFY Legal Services, Inc., Spector worked closely with community groups, organizers and tenant associations to provide legal assistance and representation to low-income tenants and workers in employment, housing and consumer cases. Spector holds a J.D. from the City University of New York School of Law, and a B.A. from Barnard College. She also clerked for the Hon. Shira A. Scheindlin from 2007-2008.

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About New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) advances equality and civil rights, with a focus on health justice, disability rights and environmental justice, through the power of community lawyering and partnerships with the private bar. Through community lawyering, NYLPI puts its legal, policy and community organizing expertise at the service of New York City communities and individuals. NYLPI's partnership with the private bar strengthens its advocacy and connects community groups and nonprofits with critical legal assistance. NYLPI is the recipient of The New York Community Trust Nonprofit Excellence Awards.

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