



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## WINNER OF ICE BOX CHALLENGE IN NEW YORK CITY ANNOUNCED

*The Ice Box Challenge Celebrates the Environmental Leadership of Brussels and New York*



**New York, NY, May 23, 2018** – The New York City Mayor’s Office of Sustainability, the Building Energy Exchange and the Brussels-Capital Region of Belgium today unveiled the results and winners of the Ice Box Challenge in New York City on the occasion of the 13th annual Brussels Days in New York when high-level dignitaries from Brussels are visiting New York to foster the economic, commercial, political and cultural ties between these two cities. The Ice Box Challenge was an interactive art installation to showcase the benefits of hyper-efficient Passive House Standard buildings. The Challenge was a simple and engaging way to raise public awareness of the critical role of high performing buildings to dramatically save energy, reduce GHG emissions, and combat climate change, while increasing occupant comfort and health. Passive House is a rigorous, voluntary standard for building performance, which was adopted as building code in Brussels in 2015. New York City has committed to adopt increasingly stringent construction and energy code requirements that will lead to this same level of building energy performance by the year 2025.

Two colorful boxes, each containing 1,800 pounds of ice, have been on display under the hot springtime sun in the heart of the Garment District at Broadway and 39<sup>th</sup> Street since April 21 until May 23. One box is built to standard building code while the other was constructed to the super-insulated Passive House Standard. The colorful boxes were decorated by renowned Brussels-based street artist, Oli-B. To generate enthusiasm, visitors were asked to guess how much ice would remain in each box for a chance to win a trip for two to Brussels and other prizes.

On May 23, a press conference revealed the contest winners and reflected on the New York City and Brussels’ expertise on high-performance building programs and policies, and their goal to further enhance their exchange of knowledge and support to each other.

After one month, the Passive House Standard box melted to 756 pounds, 42% of its original size! The box built with standard construction methods was 126 pounds, which is just 7% of its original size. This significant 630 pound difference of ice between the two boxes clearly illustrated how well the Passive House Standard box kept the springtime sun's heat out and maintained a near constant interior temperature without reliance on mechanical systems, thus demonstrating how high performance buildings can save energy. The Passive House Standard delivers up to a 90% reduction in heating and cooling demand and up to 75% reduction in overall primary energy demand compared to most existing buildings.

Brussels is leading by example with its aggressive sustainable construction policies which produced more than 15 million square feet of Passive House buildings. As of 2015, Belgium became the first region in the world to require the Passive House Standard for all new construction, adding over 2,000 new sustainable homes and buildings each year in the City of Brussels alone. The adoption led to an impressive 15% reduction in energy consumption and 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Brussels, showcasing the long-term and environmental benefits of high performing building standards.

In committing to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by the year 2050, as detailed in its 80x50 Plan, New York City has also established itself as a leader in the global fight against Climate Change. Among many strategies being developed as part of the 80x50 Plan, Brussels' successful Exemplary Building (BatEx) program was identified by the City of New York as one of the effective initiatives to model from. Brussels' successful Exemplary Building (BatEx) program was also identified by the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA) as one of the effective initiatives to model from.

New York shares the common vision to accelerate sustainable building practices and performance standards. The City has also committed \$16 million to fund the NYC Retrofit Accelerator and Community Retrofit NYC to support private building owners to pursue energy efficiency and clean energy projects, assisting over 5,000 buildings to date. The long-standing voluntary leadership program, NYC Carbon Challenge, engages with more than 100 companies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 30 to 50 percent. This program includes over 5,600 buildings representing 510 million square feet, and is anticipated to reduce citywide emissions by 1.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent and save an estimated \$700 million in energy costs.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has been working with the City and state's affordable housing agencies to expand the use of Passive House design and construction for both new construction and existing buildings. NYSEDA's Retrofit NY program empowers the industry to create impactful solutions to reduce net-energy usage and create more comfortable, healthier, and better-looking buildings. The State has committed \$30 million over 10 years for RetrofitNY, which is intended to catalyze the market through demand aggregation and partnerships with building owners and industry participants to bring a substantial portion of New York's affordable housing units to or near net-zero energy over the next decade.

The Building Energy Exchange (BE-Ex), a unique 21<sup>st</sup> century learning hub, in downtown Manhattan, plays a central role in the climate action plans of New York City and State through education, exhibits and critical tools to accelerate energy efficiency in buildings, which are responsible for 70% of New York City's greenhouse gas emissions. Inspired by Brussels's leadership in Passive construction, BE-Ex brought together the New York Icebox Challenge partnership. BE-Ex is working to promote the wide deployment of high performance buildings in NYC and beyond, including leading a new United Nations ECE International Centers of Excellence on Energy Efficiency in Buildings network.

The same Ice Boxes in New York City will be traveling through the summer to other cities to engage and educate the public, including Philadelphia, PA; Washington, D.C.; Pittsburgh, PA; and Portland, OR.

The Ice Box Challenge is brought to NYC by a partnership of the Brussels-Capital Region and Brussels Invest & Export / hub.brussels, the Building Energy Exchange and the NYC Mayor's Office of Sustainability, with support

from the NYC Department of Transportation, the Garment District Alliance, New York Passive House and many others.

“The Ice Box Challenge is a visually engaging demonstration for New Yorkers that underscores the incredible opportunities we have to improve energy efficiency in buildings, which is crucial both to battling global climate change and to creating a fairer, healthier city,” said **Mark Chambers, Director of the New York City Mayor’s Office of Sustainability**.

“On a 2015 fact-finding mission to Brussels, we found a city that had fully embraced the Passive standard for buildings. That incredibly inspiring experience has led to much collaboration and sharing between our two cities, including the Icebox Challenge”, said **Richard Yancey, Executive Director of the Building Energy Exchange**. “We look forward to helping grow this natural transatlantic partnership, driving building energy efficiency in New York City and across the globe, as, together, we tackle the biggest challenge of our generation.”

**Alicia Barton, President and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority**, said, “This demonstration truly shows the significant benefits of occupant comfort, consumer cost-savings and environmental conservation that high performance energy efficiency buildings offer. Governor Cuomo’s laser-like focus on energy efficiency will have a significant impact on the state’s ability to curb emissions and fight climate change, providing cleaner communities throughout New York State.”

"Passive House will be an integral part of achieving our commitment to greenhouse gas reduction of 80% by 2050. The competition for a sustainable future just started and it represents one of the most exciting opportunities of our generation," said **Andreas Benzing, President of the New York Passive House (NYPH)**.

"Brussels is a proud leader in accelerating high-performance building standards and passive construction practices. In the past 20 years, we have enacted very strict construction standards. These standards encouraged a wave of innovation within construction and renovation companies to develop state-of-the-art techniques and solutions to lower their impact on the environment while investing in cost-saving technologies," said **Rudi Vervoort, Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region, Head of Brussels Government**.

“Today, there are more than 15 million square feet of passive buildings in Brussels! I am proud that our Exemplary Building Program (BatEx) can be a model pathway for other cities, including New York City. We are excited to bring Ice Box Challenge from Brussels to demonstrate the ingenuity of our entrepreneurs, and we look forward to the innovative progress the Challenge will inspire in the building and design sector," said **Cécile Jodogne, Secretary of State for the Brussels-Capital Region in charge of foreign trade and investment**.

For more info on the Ice Box Challenge, log onto [nyc.iceboxchallenge.com](http://nyc.iceboxchallenge.com) and <http://brusselsdays.brussels/new-york/>.

For more Information on Passive House Standard, visit [nyc.iceboxchallenge.com/why/](http://nyc.iceboxchallenge.com/why/)

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