

NY Small Businesses Need Power to Grow

By Mike Elmendorf



From Buffalo to Albany and Massena to Montauk, small business owners tell you how tough it is to do business in New York. It is not just the economic downturn; long before that, New York had one of the highest costs of doing business in the nation, second only to Hawaii. What's our excuse?

There are many reasons for this--among them, the nation's highest tax burden and sky-rocketing health insurance costs. Another major factor is the cost of energy in New York.

No matter what your business is, you need energy, and small business owners are troubled by their rising energy costs. In the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)'s most recent Small Business Problems & Priorities report, electrical rates were ranked among the top ten issues confronting small business. Our energy costs are the third highest in the nation, nearly 50 percent above the national average. Why?

It has been more than a decade since significant new generation was brought online in New York. The issue here is far more serious than just cost, as demand could soon exceed supply.

New York's power plant siting law expired in 2002, making it nearly impossible to invest in and build a new generation of clean and efficient power plants designed to meet our state's growing demand for electricity. We need to maintain our current generation capacity and bring new generation online to meet rising demand and lower energy costs. The governor and legislature should come together to enact a siting law to allow us to do just that.

New York faces extraordinarily serious economic and budgetary challenges. Small business, the engine that drives our state's economy and is responsible for more than two-thirds of all job creation, is key to any economic recovery. The best way to help small businesses thrive, grow and create new opportunities is to lower our strangling cost of doing business. Increasing energy supply and reducing energy costs would do just that.

Mike Elmendorf is the New York State Director of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), New York's leading small business advocacy organization representing approximately 11,000 New York businesses.

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