

Supporting Our Sputtering Economy



By Marsha Gordon

It comes as no surprise to any New Yorker that we are facing an economic crisis not seen in decades. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, unemployment has risen to 8.1% nationally. In New York State, 1.1 million New Yorkers are now out of a job.

On behalf of the 1,200 businesses represented by The Business Council of Westchester, we are focused on stabilizing our economy and moving it towards a successful recovery. A renewed focus on our energy future will facilitate these critical objectives.

In January, 2008, a study co-sponsored by The Business Council of Westchester and three other Westchester-based business groups found our economy can be bolstered through a renewed commitment to a revamped energy transmission system and new power generation resources. Our study also demonstrated how critical the Indian Point Energy Center is to the downstate economy.

More than 75 percent of the electricity consumed within the lower Hudson Valley is produced by Indian Point Energy Center. The facility's 2,000-plus megawatts of electricity powers up to 2 million homes, all without emitting greenhouse gasses. Closure of Indian Point would severely impact our region's quality-of-life, contributing to the loss of 11,000 jobs, \$2.1 billion in cumulative lost wages, and nearly \$5.5 billion in lost economic output.

Additionally, while some elected officials seek to end Indian Point's operations, no realistic or credible alternatives to replace Indian Point have been made. This is irresponsible and ill-timed. To say that Indian Point is the backbone of our electricity network would be a certain understatement.

To get our economy moving again, we must invest in modernized transmission systems, focus on research and development of renewable energy, and renew our state's Article X power plant siting law. We must also rightfully demand energy conservation and efficiencies at every turn. However, none of these objectives will matter without Indian Point's 2,000 megawatts of clean, safe and reliable electricity powering New York's homes and businesses.

Marsha Gordon is President and CEO of The Business Council of Westchester, and an advisory board member of the New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance.

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