

Powering New York's Economic Recovery



By Bruce E. Ventimiglia

With our nation mired in one of the worst economic collapses since the Great Depression, I am heartened to see President Obama leading the charge to put Americans back to work. The President's focus on revitalizing our long neglected infrastructure is a common-sense approach that will create jobs, spur investment and help turn around our slumping economy.

In New York State, a renewed focus on infrastructure is needed more than ever. Upgrades to our state's energy infrastructure have been continually neglected, and policymakers inexcusably allowed the Article X power plant siting law to expire six years ago. As a result, there is no expedited process for siting and building new power plants while electricity continues to be transmitted through an inefficient and antiquated delivery system.

The effects of this procrastination have left New Yorkers at a disadvantage. Escalating utility costs have forced businesses to downsize their workforces, reduce benefits to employees or raise product costs that must be absorbed by consumers. More than anyone else, working families have taken the hardest hit.

Investing in a modern energy infrastructure and implementing a new power plant siting law are two issues that unite New York's business and labor communities. Furthermore, it is clear that our state policymakers can help turn around New York's struggling economy by following President Obama's plan to fortify and modernize our energy infrastructure.

Replacing inefficient and outdated power transmission systems, updating the electric grid and investing in smart-meter technology will reduce transmission loss and ultimately lower costs for consumers. Implementing a new, comprehensive power plant siting law will also stabilize our energy supply, spur investment and create new jobs.

When our nation has called for strong and effective leadership, New Yorkers have always risen to the challenge. These times call for decisive leadership. Powering our economic recovery through investment in our energy infrastructure is an intelligent and productive initiative to strengthen our economy.

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