

Economic Growth, Environmental Sustainability Make Good Business Sense



by *Dr. Marsha Gordon*

Here in Westchester County, we know that you can protect the environment, create jobs and build a sustainable future at the same time. Economic growth and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they are complementary and make good business sense.

The Business Council of Westchester has long been at the forefront of promoting sustainable business practices that contribute to our region's quality-of-life. The rebirth of the Hudson River has only fostered new opportunities for Westchester residents.

Watching the pleasure boaters, crabbers and other recreational fishermen filling the coastline, we are reminded of the great river's comeback. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said just three years ago that the Hudson "produces more pounds of fish per acre than any other water body in the North Atlantic." He's right.

Along the Hudson, we also find one of our community's largest employers. According to a 2008 Westchester Business Alliance study, Entergy's Indian Point Energy Center is responsible for as many as 11,000 jobs, \$2.1 billion in cumulative wages and nearly \$5.5 billion in cumulative economic output. It is also one of the largest producers of electricity in the state, providing more than a quarter of the electricity for Westchester and New York City.

Leaders within the business community long ago recognized that there is no viable alternative to Indian Point's 2,000 megawatts of clean, affordable and reliable energy. The Westchester Business Alliance joined with the Construction Industry Council, the Westchester County Board of Realtors, and the Building and Realty Institute in publicly cautioning against an ill-advised rush to close Indian Point.

Though the economic benefits are pronounced, the environmental benefits are just as valuable.

Not only does Indian Point operate in a virtually emissions-free manner, but is a key reason for New York's laudable per-capita carbon emissions rate – the lowest in the nation. In December, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission completed more than three years of intense, top-to-bottom reviews of the plant and concluded that "there are no environmental impacts that would preclude license renewal for an additional 20 years of operation."

Protecting the environment is not only the right thing to do. In Westchester County, it clearly makes good business sense. Indian Point supports both of these goals, and must remain part of our energy future.

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The New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance (New York AREA) is a diverse group of business, labor, environmental, and community leaders working together for clean, low-cost and reliable electricity solutions that foster prosperity and jobs for the Empire State.

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