

New York Controlling Its Own Destiny



By: Jerry Connolly

Labor unions across America recently held vigils and rallies advocating for workplace dignity, protection of the right to organize and collectively bargain for fair wages and better working conditions.

In 2011 union members across America and right here in New York are finding their workplace rights and future under attack.

Special interests working throughout Albany are fighting to outsource union jobs, dimming our state's prospects for economic recovery. Their plan is not to send jobs to China, India or Mexico, but rather places like New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Canada.

Here's how: Consider the plight of the highly skilled Boilermaker, Millwright, Carpenter or Electrical Worker who build and maintain power plants in New York. As some of these trade unionists encounter 50 percent unemployment, the powerful Albany environmental lobby has been agitating to legislate and over regulate against in-state power production.

Their shortsighted energy plan includes closing down vital power generation facilities we depend on for power and jobs, replacing them with imported electricity. This includes a 385 mile extension cord bringing 1,000 MW of electricity from Canada and 660 MW coming from New Jersey to Manhattan, as well as making New York the end user of gas extracted from the Pennsylvania side of the Marcellus Shale.

Each of these examples screams out that New York needs a new power plant siting law, as major energy investors are circling New York, but won't invest their dollars here due to red tape. In order to retain jobs that are quickly slipping away, we need a common sense New York State energy plan that maintains vital energy sources including the Fitzpatrick and Indian Point nuclear power plants, and which facilitates the building of new base load power.

The challenge is to maintain New York's ability to control its own energy and economic future. Otherwise we will continue to stand still while our neighbors pass us by and become the masters of New York's destiny.

Jerry Connolly is the retired Business Manager of Boilermakers Local 5 and a 40 year veteran of the labor movement. He serves as spokesperson for the Coalition of Labor for Energy and Jobs. For additional information visit www.coalition4energyandjobs.org

SPECIAL SPONSORED SECTION

NY

A* R* E* A

AFFORDABLE RELIABLE
ELECTRICITY ALLIANCE

New York AREA's membership includes some of the state's most vital business, labor and community organizations including the New York State AFL-CIO, Business Council of New York State, Partnership for New York City, New York Building Congress, National Federation of Independent Business and many more.

WWW.AREA-ALLIANCE.ORG