

Infrastructure Investments Crucial to New York State



By Arthur (Jerry) Kremer

New York State is facing some tough times. Families are closing the purse strings and feeling the weight of the economy. In Albany, officials are considering the best way to revive our struggling economy.

History demonstrates that one of the best places to invest capital during tough times is on infrastructure improvements. One of the great successes of the New Deal was F.D.R.'s ability to create new jobs while making much needed repairs to infrastructure across the country. It was a short term fix as well as a long term investment.

Unfortunately, much of our energy and transportation infrastructure is a vestige of times gone by, especially in the case of New York State. Each year we spend tax dollars merely doing temporary fixes and avoiding real progress.

The Obama Administration will have the opportunity to fix some of our current ills, but New York State must lead on its own, focusing on energy infrastructure. New construction projects of large size will in the short term provide jobs and an influx of capital to local economies and in the long term, help secure New York's energy needs.

In New York no new power plants of any major size have been constructed for almost five years due to the lapse of Article X, our power plant siting law. This past summer we once again experienced record demand for electricity, yet no new generation is planned and the additional stress on our electric grid puts us in an untenable position. The lack of a siting law discourages investors from doing business in the state and spending large amounts of capital.

We need to keep all energy options on the table; determine where it's appropriate to drill in the Marcellus Shale field; where we can site new power plants, and where new transmission lines can be built to bring power to our homes and businesses, while maintaining all current sources of baseload power.

Reliable electricity generation and transmission capability are critical for every economy, and in New York State it's no different. Our solutions today must prepare us for tomorrow.

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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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