

Prime the Pump for our Energy Future



By Robert A. Ledwith

Change has finally come to America, and not a moment too soon.

With a decaying national infrastructure, a weakened economy and challenges large and small dominating the thoughts of New York's working families, there is no question that President Obama has a bevy of challenges awaiting his action starting January 20.

The President and his team campaigned and won on a promise to "prime the pump," and inject capital into our depressed economy through direct investment in our crumbling infrastructure. No matter how you phrase it, this wise action will put our nation back to work.

I am pleased to see the support this has generated in New York from leaders across the political and ideological spectrum. Working families on Main Street will certainly be the beneficiaries of this wise action.

However, our leaders cannot neglect our aging energy infrastructure during this critical period in our nation's history. New York State faces serious energy challenges over the next decade. An aging electricity infrastructure, an out-dated grid, a lack of a comprehensive power plant siting law, and the rising demand for reliable, low-cost electricity are only some of the many energy-related issues dominating Albany's legislative deliberations.

Additionally, there are those who desire to close the Indian Point Energy Center. This offers disastrous implications for New York's working families – including higher electricity costs, rolling brownouts and service interruptions, among others. Indian Point also employs more than one thousand workers; many of whom are union members.

A comprehensive statewide energy policy that uses Union Building Trades labor, protects existing baseload power resources, invests in a modernized electricity infrastructure, and supports a new power plant siting law will speed New York's journey from recession to recovery.

Priming the pump for our energy future is the right step for New York's hard-pressed working families.

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