

Empowering New Yorkers Requires Smart Policy



By: *Melvin Burruss*

To lift our communities from the current recession and empower a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs, we need forward-thinking energy policy that safeguards system reliability, creates new economic opportunities and protects our natural environment. If New York doesn't keep up with rising electricity demand, businesses will leave or chose to locate elsewhere, taking jobs with them.

Our state energy policy must consider the environment. Many older fossil fuel-burning power plants have been closed to reduce New York's carbon footprint. While we have made progress toward this goal, we also must ensure that our power supply is comprised of affordable, reliable and environmentally-friendly generating resources, such as nuclear energy and hydropower.

Effective energy policy promotes the use of smart grid technologies which are designed to deliver electricity from suppliers to consumers with two-way digital communications that enable consumers to make smarter, more efficient energy choices. Advocating for continued investment in smart grid technology has long been a priority of the African American Men of Westchester.

However, smart public policy does not force communities into hardship and imperil the reliability of the grid. And smart public policy does not jeopardize a key clean energy provider for the power-hungry downstate region.

As a resident of Peekskill, I am particularly disturbed that the DEC is requiring Indian Point to build two, 14-story cooling towers, each the size of Yankee Stadium – and each placed along the scenic shoreline of the Hudson. Construction of these towers could take ten years and have major consequences for our community.

Furthermore, the DEC proposes no solution to keep our already sky-high electricity rates from rising even further. And remarkably, they remain silent about the 100 tons of particulate matter that cooling towers will emit annually into the air. How is that good for our community?

It's time for a smart approach to energy policy, one rooted in common sense. And it's time we utilize technological advances to protect our environment, create jobs, grow our economy and meet our region's growing demands for power.

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