

Listen to Your Friends and Neighbors



By: Mike Tracey

When building the future of our great state, it is only fitting that we turn to New York's skilled union trades to lead the way. As union insulators representing Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Putnam and Dutchess Counties, we are proud to partner with our businesses, power producers and non-profits to help them save energy and achieve significant financial savings.

The union insulators making up Local 91 are little league coaches, church volunteers and fellow taxpayers. We share your concerns about rising property taxes and stagnant job growth. And we are partners in securing a better quality-of-life for all New Yorkers.

Yet, we are also acutely aware of the impact of large-scale layoffs on our communities – such as IBM in East Fishkill, and now Pfizer in Pearl River. We have also seen the consequences that closure of a power facility can have on working families, such as the case with Tompkins Cove.

For members of my local, we are now experiencing an unemployment rate exceeding 45 percent.

These factors are concerning, indeed. But there is a new threat now that the State DEC is fixated on forcing power plants and other businesses across New York to employ costly, often unnecessary retrofits intended to protect fish, fish eggs and other larvae. And if that was not enough, certain policymakers in Albany and beyond are fixated on closing Westchester's Indian Point Energy Center utilizing these very same means.

Indian Point is a union facility that employs union labor such as our local to maintain its infrastructure. It provides safe, clean and affordable power for the Hudson Valley and New York City. It also provides up to nearly 10 percent of our state's power on some days and generates over \$1 billion in direct and indirect economic activity throughout the region.

Sadly, many of the same politicians seeking to close Indian Point are the same people who turn to organized labor to power their election efforts. This is unacceptable.

In an ongoing dialogue amongst friends, we owe it to our members and to all New Yorkers to ensure that our elected officials are truly listening to the voices of working families. The stakes have never been higher.

Mike Tracey is the Business Manager for Insulators Local 91, which covers Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Putnam and Dutchess Counties. He is a member of the New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance.

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