



Make investments now to stave off electricity crisis tomorrow



By: Charlie North

The summer of 2008 will mark the five year anniversary of the 2003 blackout, which caused more than \$1 billion in economic damages in a 48-hour period and put millions of people in the dark, many for very long periods of time. Without investments in energy infrastructure, including generation and transmission, costly and potentially dangerous blackouts may become increasingly common.

Recently, the Northeast Power Coordinating Council (NPCC) reported that 501.4 megawatts of power have been lost from the grid—that is enough power more than half a million homes - because of the retirement of Lovett 5 generator (188.3 megawatts), Russell Station generator (236.4 megawatts), and Ogdensburg (76.7 megawatts).

New York's economy and growing population have been driving the demand for greater electricity supply. According to the NPCC Summer Reliability Assessments Summary Report, the summer 2008 forecast demand for New York is 1,640 megawatts (5.1 percent) higher than the summer peak demand of 32,169 megawatts that occurred on August 8, 2007. Unless we initiate the plans for new power generation facilities and infrastructure, New York may face acute energy supply shortages as early as 2012.

New York State can meet its growing energy demand with positive results by fostering an environment that encourages investment into the energy sector, keeping our current clean nuclear and hydroelectric sources online, and adding new renewable energy sources and transmission lines to the grid.

With New York paying some of the highest electricity rates in the nation, there is a negative ripple effect on the growth of businesses and the economy. This puts enormous pressure on businesses and residential customers.

These high electricity rates also impede the economic development and job creation of the future. Lowering these costs while increasing the reliability of our electricity supply is critical.

We must get the ball rolling today to develop the plans that will meet tomorrow's energy needs. Let's keep our focus on the real goals, make the tough decisions, and work together to make them a reality in 2008.

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