



## State Must Address Need for More Electricity



By Al Samuels

According to recent reports by the New York Independent System Operator, New York's downstate region will need significant new sources of electricity by 2013 just to meet basic energy demand. Without new sources of power, the growing demand could outstrip supply, increasing the potential for costly and dangerous power shortages.

New York already has some of the highest costs of doing business in the nation, and electricity rates are a major contributor to that. The state's average energy rate of more than 17 cents per kilowatt hour is nearly twice the national average rate of 8.8 cents. Businesses and investors regularly cite the high cost of electricity as a major inhibitor of economic growth in New York.

In my home county of Rockland, we recently witnessed the closing of a significant manufacturer, and clearly, high electricity costs were a factor.

Having no power plant siting law in New York sends the wrong message to investors with ideas to construct much needed, in-state power plants. New sources of power are being constructed in surrounding states, and New York is losing out on the jobs and tax revenues that these projects bring.

In Rockland County the Town of Haverstraw is willing to host a new natural gas plant, which would create key jobs, electricity, and tax dollars. But there is no mechanism in place at the state level to help facilitate the construction of new plants. The now defunct Article X power plant siting law has been expired for over five years. We need to make every effort to ensure that this law is re-enacted to foster the development of new sources of power generation to meet New York's increasing energy demand.

In addition to new plants, we also need to keep our cleanest and most efficient sources of power online, like the Indian Point Energy Center and the rest of our state's nuclear power plants. We cannot overlook the need to preserve and maintain our current sources of clean, emission-free electricity.

By working together, we can ensure that New York's economy and businesses can continue to prosper for years to come.

*The author is President/CEO of the Rockland Business Association, representing more than 1,000 businesses which employ more than 60,000 residents of the Hudson Valley, and is also an Advisory Board member of New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance*

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