

Priming the Pump with Effective Energy Policy



By Arthur "Jerry" Kremer

We have all seen the headlines. Tax revenues are down, financial needs of municipalities are greater and taxpayers are struggling to foot the bill.

During the 12 years I served as chairman of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, our state faced numerous financial obstacles. Time and time again, Mayors, Town Supervisors and County Executives would petition for key legislative initiatives to create jobs and economic development. Fast forward to 2010 and nothing has changed with one exception. We are now 28 months past the National Bureau of Economic Research predicting the beginning of "one of the longest downturns since the Great Depression of the 1930's."

In 2010, the legislature should make passage of a new, fuel-neutral power plant siting law a top priority. Such a law will create new, good paying jobs while also satisfying the growing energy demands placed on our grid.

New projects such as wind power off the coast of the Rockaways and a new nuclear reactor at Nine Mile Point will also generate new jobs while further growing New York's reputation as a center for green innovation.

Often our state's highly vocal NIMBY chorus — typically the same crowd of anti's over and over again — snuff out projects that produce long term jobs, needed infrastructure, economic development and tax revenues for our communities. This is not viable public policy, and will do nothing to speed our State's economic recovery.

Additionally, we must also support our state's existing clean-energy infrastructure and that starts with Westchester's Indian Point Energy Center. The virtually emissions-free operation of Indian Point is a key reason why New York State now possesses the lowest per-capita carbon emissions rate in the nation. Closure of the facility would not only foster a negative impact on our environment, but would eliminate thousands of jobs and raise electric rates by more than three times the national average. In today's economic climate, New York's working families cannot bear this burden.

New York must prime the pump to prepare for economic recovery and future prosperity. Enactment of targeted, effective energy policy will do just that. We can't afford another year of inaction in Albany.

Arthur "Jerry" Kremer is the Chairman of the New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance (New York AREA). A 23-year veteran of the New York State Assembly, he chaired the prestigious Ways and Means Committee for 12 years. He served by appointment of the Governor on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Capital Review Board and the Public Authorities Control Board. Mr. Kremer is also a principal author of the state's now expired power plant siting law.

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The New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance (New York AREA) is a diverse group of business, labor, environmental, and community leaders working together for clean, low-cost and reliable electricity solutions that foster prosperity and jobs for the Empire State.

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