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Comments on the Draft 2009 New York State Energy Plan

Investing in New York State's energy economy is an important step in protecting our residents, businesses, as well as New York State's environmental welfare. The proposed state energy plan discusses many of the necessary steps and investments needed to move our state forward and continue meeting future energy needs in a cost efficient and environmentally-responsible manner. Unfortunately it does not address the significant role of New York State's workforce in achieving and maintaining our State's energy goals. The state highlights in its policy objectives, "affordability concerns of residents and businesses caused by rising energy bills" as well as intent to "reduce health and environmental risks". Both of these concerns are directly impacted by the workforce that will be needed to understand, operate and maintain new energy efficient technology, as well as transform our current energy production and delivery system. Any investments in green technology and infrastructure that are not accompanied by an investment in training workers, and in particular those workers to maintain the State's commercial and residential buildings, will likely result in a state energy plan that does not live up to its full potential.

Buildings in the United States produce more greenhouse gases and consume more energy than any other sector of our economy. Emissions and greenhouses gases from buildings in New York City make up three fourths of the carbon dioxide that enters our air. Buildings with poor air quality are often worse for residents increase health problems such as asthma and allergy symptoms as well as irritation of ears, nose and throat. The negative health effects on our residents, the unnecessary and adverse impact on our environment, and the growing economic impact on our state and citizens can all be prevented if the state invests in training and growing a work force to maintain our buildings. Thankfully, smarter technology practices and better training of workers who maintain buildings can reduce energy use in buildings by 10-40% and provide an immediate increase in cost savings after improvements are made.

Building service workers and superintendents are the individuals most responsible for a building's operations and maintenance. Building managers, who work in a building every day, are the hub of a building's workforce in that only they can make the multitude of modifications and corrections needed to ensure a building is able to function at its maximum efficiency.



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There are many low cost and no cost techniques properly trained professionals can implement that reduce a building's energy costs and increase its efficiency for residents and management. Simple repairs such as light bulb upgrades, pipe insulation, or exterior weather stripping and sealing are improvements a trained superintendent can identify and begin the cost savings process as well as increase the building's energy security.

SEIU 32BJ is the largest property service union in the country with 70,000 members in New York State. Since 2005, 32BJ's Thomas Shortman Training Fund, a joint labor-management organization that provides training to 32BJ members, has provided extensive training courses for building service professionals on green building techniques to make our buildings more efficient. One of the most cost effective ways to ensure a green building becomes and remains 'green' is to make certain the building is monitored by a knowledgeable and well-trained workforce. Recently, the Shortman Training Fund launched its first year of a program entitled: 1,000 Green Supers. The program trains superintendents, resident managers, and handypersons to become energy efficient building operators and are certified by the Building Performance Institute and the Urban Green Council. This knowledge enables our building professionals to recognize and apply preventive maintenance techniques, properly maintain capital investments such as equipment or building repairs, and help identify potential future investments to further maximize a building's efficiency for residents and businesses. 32BJ and organized labor is uniquely equipped to serve as a partner in helping our state meet the workforce and training needs in order to truly become a green and energy efficient state.

The State's energy plan offers a number of recommendations in the section titled "Produce, Deliver, and Use Energy More Efficiently". Most of these recommendations focus on energy investments, decreasing the state's dependency on energy imports, increasing the reliability and security of New York's energy systems, and maximizing the state's in-state energy supply. Although these have their merits, none of them give any focus to the significant impact that properly maintained buildings can potentially have on lowering New York's energy usage or increasing cost savings. The recommendations fail to address the impact that New Yorkers play in affecting our energy systems or the potential roles in which workers can begin to reduce the negative effects by applying cost efficient strategies in current buildings. The energy plan cannot fully address the state's energy problems and needs without including measures that directly address the effects of building maintenance and a fully trained workforce.

The importance of a knowledgeable and trained building staff cannot be overstated. Studies have shown that capital investment in buildings without properly training the workforce to maintain new technology typically results in wasted time, money, and resources. The technological investment is rarely maximized by those who don't understand how to operate it. The energy plan set forth by the state is ambitious and



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achievable, but will not maximize the resources without any emphasis on operations and maintenance training for building service personnel. For this reason we strongly recommend the state review its plan and include a component which focuses on workforce development and the role that New York's workers play in achieving the vision of a clean energy economy.