



OPENING OPPORTUNITIES

September 21, 2009

The Honorable David A. Paterson, Governor
State of New York
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

My name is Ron Forehand and I am proud to serve as President and CEO of the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce in Peekskill. Our organization of businesses and civic members joined to promote and open opportunities for its members by exchanging ideas, educating and advocating on behalf of businesses in order to foster the growth and well-being of its members and to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve. The chamber represents the lower Hudson Valley region, including Croton-on-Hudson, Cortlandt, Peekskill, Montrose, Buchanan, Verplanck and Putnam Valley.

At the Gateway Chamber, we have taken a strong interest in the issues of energy and the environment. We believe that the path to sustainability relies in a balanced approach to our energy future. One that certainly adheres to the principles of environmental sustainability, energy efficiency and environmental conservation – but also one which takes a long-term approach towards lowering utility costs, meeting energy demand, and ensuring adequate baseload supply.

In reviewing the proposed plan, there are a number of items which stand right out. Among the items cited are: a revitalized power plant siting law; construction of new transmission infrastructure that utilizes existing right-of-way; additional investment in research and development of renewable energy; and workforce training for a new generation of green-collar jobs. These are all positive developments that the Chamber clearly endorses.

Despite these many positive developments, we are extremely disappointed that the plan fails to address the costs associated with skyrocketing energy costs – particularly state and local-levied taxes and fees such as the Gross Receipts Tax, as well as the need for property tax relief – a key to New York's high utility rates. For the members of my Chamber, high utility costs remain one of the greatest obstacles to growing their business. They deserve help and they deserve relief. Please make this issue a clear part of your final plan.

In addition, the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce is unequivocally opposed to your support for closing the Indian Point Energy Center. As a critical linchpin of our community in so many different ways, let me note that this proposal would devastate our community – and wreak havoc on the lives of all New Yorkers.

First, let's talk safety. For our members who live and work within the vicinity of the plant, they know that Indian Point is indeed a safe facility. They see the plant as a virtual fortress, and are reassured by the heavily armed presence throughout the plant's perimeter – and even outside it. They know that the plant is the most scrutinized of all US power plants. Safety is always the top priority for all involved at Indian Point.

Our members are also well aware that the federal government's independent safety experts just last month attested to the safety and security of the facility by issuing a favorable final safety evaluation report. This is a significant and important step forward in the license renewal process – one we strongly favor.

Second, let's talk about the environment. Indian Point is not just a safe facility – it is key to New York's success under the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative – and will be a critical factor towards ensuring compliance under federal cap and trade legislation. Indian Point produces more than 2,000 megawatts of clean, virtually emissions-free energy. It is a critical component to New York achieving the distinction of having one of the lowest per-capita carbon emissions counts in the nation. Replacing Indian Point's energy through conservation, efficiencies and construction of a natural gas facility is unrealistic – and wishful thinking. And as I've stated publicly before: in general, replacing the amount of energy that we get from the plant is a substantial chore

Third, let's talk about our community. Indian Point and their owner, Entergy has proven themselves many times over as a trusted, honest community servant.

Conservatively, Indian Point accounts for \$1 billion a year in local economic activity. Studies have shown that closing Indian Point would lead to more than 11,000 job losses, and a total loss to the region exceeding \$2 billion in cumulative lost wages.

The Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber has an Entergy representative on our board of directors, so I get to see firsthand their commitment to the surrounding communities. In recent years the company has received The U.S. Community Service Award commending them on the positive difference they make in the local community. Entergy has gone beyond the call of duty to help make the New York's Hudson Valley a better place to live.

While there is much in the plan to praise and recognize, the plan's focus on shutting down Indian Point will bring about far-reaching implications that will adversely affect all New Yorkers. Moreover, no realistic or credible alternatives to replace Indian Point have been made in the wake of this draft energy plan. This is both irresponsible and ill-timed. To say that Indian Point is the backbone of our electricity network and a critical economic engine for the Hudson Valley's economy would be vast understatements.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts.

Sincerely yours,



Ron C. Forehand, Sr.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce