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Re: Energy Plan Scope Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on the scope of the New York State Energy Plan during our June 27, 2008 meeting. The purpose of this correspondence is to provide the Energy Coordinating Working Group with my comments in writing on behalf of the Workforce Development Institute (WDI).

Since our focus at the WDI is to improve the lives of working families across New York State through education and training and through programs that encourage economic development, we believe the emerging trends in the energy sector offer unique opportunities for job creation. These opportunities could have a positive impact for emerging and incumbent workers, many of the latter who are employed in declining industries or who will be needed to support the State's Energy Plan objectives.

In reviewing the scope document, there is an absence of anything specific that addresses workforce development needs which are likely to result from implementation of the prospective Energy Plan. A reiteration of the points that I made during our meeting are as follows:

- The scope document should include a component for assessment and analysis of workforce impact that will occur with Energy Plan implementation.
- The scope document and the eventual Plan should include a statement on the importance of investment in the workforce so that New York State can achieve the Plan's objectives. For example, if energy efficiency is integral to the Plan, the Plan should include steps that must occur to prepare the workforce for the required job tasks, such as training more weatherization specialists and energy auditors.
- Since workforce issues are important to the success of the Energy Plan, then the NYS Department of Labor should be part of the discussion. Through its latest initiative to implement sectoral strategies for employment development and with one of the target sectors being green jobs, DOL staff is vital to the substance of the discussions around workforce development issues. Minimally, DOL should be part of the Energy Planning Board and also should be represented on relevant subcommittees and working groups.
- The Plan should address whether industries on the decline in New York can be retooled for emerging energy technologies. The Energy Plan presents us with an opportunity to retain or create manufacturing jobs that pay living wages. Upstate New York is fast becoming a leader in electricity generation through wind turbines. Strategies should be

developed that pursue opportunities to manufacture components, many of which are backlogged and manufactured in other states and countries, closer to the location of the wind farms. Additionally, New York should ready its workforce for the anticipated impact of the recently enacted net metering legislation which, in other states with similar legislation, has bolstered the demand for photovoltaic installations and other forms of renewable energy.

- Under the category entitled, “Energy Costs and Economic Development”, it mentions that, “This issue brief will also explore the economic effects of energy investments and how New York may be positioned in a carbon-constrained economy”. I would add a statement that this issue brief also will explore workforce related issues as New York moves toward cleaner, renewable sources of energy and greater energy efficiency.
- Under the category of Environmental Justice, a fourth point should be added that speaks to potential employment opportunities for all people as new sources of energy and programs for energy efficiency are implemented. Specifically, those people most adversely impacted by existing energy and industrial facilities should be targeted for inclusion in green job training programs. During our meeting, I mentioned the Green Job Corps initiative in Oakland California as a way to involve inner city residents in clean energy job growth. New York should strive to replicate the best of this program and others like it as a way of meeting the objectives of the Energy Plan and providing gainful employment to individuals who are most needy. Input from organized labor, the business community, the NYS Department of Labor and other government agencies are critical to the success of such programs.
- Finally, the Energy Plan should include workforce development strategies that address building alliances between employers, unions, educational institutions and government to ensure that New York’s workforce is ready to meet the challenges likely to be posed by the Energy Plan and related initiatives such as 15 by 15.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the scope document for the 2009 Energy Plan. If I can provide any further information, do not hesitate to contact me at 518/272-3500 x110 or via e-mail at pshatsoff@wdiny.org.

Sincerely,
Paul D. Shatsoff
Director of Government Relations