



Local Union 97

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

New York State

URGENT

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

As most of you are aware, IBEW Local 97 along with the New York State Utility Council has been aggressively advocating for upgrades in the NYS transmission system, a majority of which are in our Local Union territory.

NYS power generators continue to struggle as downstate demand for electricity grows exponentially, and a plan to run an extension cord from Quebec to NY City moves ahead, while those that are opposed to upgrading our own aged and congested transmission lines are making their voices heard.

We are encouraged by Governor Cuomo's call for NYS transmission upgrades in his Energy Highway Blueprint, along with 2014 State of the State objectives to expedite this work in existing rights of way, but the State through the open dockets at the **NYS PSC need to hear quickly from those in favor!**

This is an urgent appeal to ask you to take a moment to "comment" in favor of the upgrades in our NY transmission lines.

Please go to the NYS PSC website: <http://www.dps.ny.gov/>.

Click on "Alternating Current Transmission Upgrades" – then "Comments":

Speak from the heart on the importance to jobs, tax base and the NYS economy, but a few helpful bullets to consider:

- We support Governor Cuomo's call to upgrade NYS transmission lines in existing rights of way.
- NYS must move quickly to update and address aged congested transmission lines. Thousands of jobs, millions of local property tax revenues and billions in overall economic development for NYS are all on the line.
- NYS customers deserve an investment in upgrading existing transmission lines as soon as possible; safety, reliability and the ability to deliver cost effective power are all at stake.
- We urge you to rule in favor of the Governor's call to expedite investment into existing transmission lines in existing rights of way.

Please take a moment to submit your comment – achieving the right outcome is critical!!

THANK YOU

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January 21, 2014

Mr. Mario Cilento
President, New York State AFL-CIO
100 South Swan St.
Albany NY 12210

Dear President Cilento:

I write today in my capacity as Chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee to ask for your assistance and the assistance of your members on an issue that is vitally important to the economic development and energy future of the State of New York—upgrading New York's transmission infrastructure.

As you know, thousands of union workers are employed in the utility and generation sector across our state. These workers form the backbone of our energy grid and the wages, benefits and job security that these jobs provide is critical to our working families. In many ways, these jobs in the energy sector are the last major industrial jobs that have not been outsourced, and as such I am committed to doing everything I can to support them.

In 2010, the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) issued its New York State Transmission and Reliability Study (STARS) that identified significant bottlenecks in our transmission infrastructure. In essence, New York's transmission infrastructure which is decades old could not effectuate the transfer of electricity from upstate New York to the New York City market efficiently. The report demonstrated that this problem was costing ratepayers across the state \$650 million a year in congestion charges thereby artificially raising rates while impeding grid reliability.

In 2012, the Governor announced his Energy Highway initiative to address this problem. The goal was to develop transmission improvement projects that would ease congestion charges, allow the transfer of an additional 1000 megawatts of power from upstate generators to New York City and create thousands of additional jobs in the process. As a part of this process the Public Service Commission (PSC) initiated the AC transmission proceeding in order to vet various transmission proposals. As of this writing the Commission has whittled down the list of possible developers to just four, and it is moving forward with the RFP and Article VII process on a dual track.

Let me be clear about the positive impact that the implementation of a successful transmission upgrade proposal would have in terms of union jobs: This would be the largest statewide economic development driver that has been seen in decades. Here are just a few of the high points:

- **In total, I estimate that the implementation of a successful transmission upgrade proposal will generate more than \$7 billion in economic activity in the state and will create 12,000 direct and nearly 38,000 total jobs.**
- **The proposed transmission projects will facilitate the development of renewable generation. This, in turn will generate almost \$4.6 billion of economic activity and create an additional 8,000 direct jobs.**
- **Further, it is anticipated that there will be approximately \$175 million of annual electric production cost savings and the potential for additional economic and public policy benefits for consumers.**
- **I also expect that these projects will have a significant, positive environmental impact by reducing annual CO2 and NOX emissions by 370,000 tons and 200,000 tons, respectively.**

These benefits are good for the economy, good for the environment and vitally important to working men and women in our state. However, they are also under attack by groups who either do not understand the proposals or would simply like to block them for their own reasons. Recently, opponents have sought to create the false view that these projects do not have widespread support by flooding the Public Service Commission with negative comments and raising issues in the media. This is the playbook that activists use because they have, in the past, been able to do so without a counterweight. Sadly, they have also been successful. Time and again, steel in the ground economic development projects that would benefit union workers have been stymied in the regulatory process and battered into submission in the media, using half truths, innuendo and stilted facts.

We simply cannot let that happen this time.

Therefore I am asking for your help. Working together, we can ensure that the true and positive story about these transmission projects is told by activating the voices of thousands of union members across our state.

As I mentioned previously, the PSC has a process underway on this important issue. My request is that the AFL-CIO reach out to all its members and affiliates and ask for their support in filing comments on this case that reflect the true benefits that these projects entail. Comments can be filed electronically through the Commissions website at <http://www.dps.ny.gov/>.

I am very encouraged by Governor Cuomo's public leadership on this topic, including his excellent proposal in the State of the State to expedite these upgrades as long as projects remain

in the existing right of way. If we stand shoulder to shoulder on this issue and support these common sense proposals I feel sure we will prevail.

Thanks again for your time and consideration on this important matter. Should you or your staff need any additional information, please feel free to contact me directly or to speak with my Director of Operations Matt Nelligan. We can be reached at 518-455-2024.

Sincerely,



Senator George Maziarz
Chairman, Senate Energy and
Telecommunications Committee

GDM: mn

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