

NEW JERSEY STATE AFL-CIO

106 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08608

(609) 989-8730

FAX (609) 989-8734

www.njafclcio.org



CHARLES WOVKANECH LAUREL BRENNAN

CHARLES H. MARCIANTE

SCOTT ADAMS	JOHN GERRY	C. ROBERT McDEVITT	ANTHONY SANTO
JOYCE ALSTON	THOMAS GIBLIN	GERARD MEARA	DAVID SCHNECK
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SHARON EASTWICK	CHRISTINE KERBER	RAYMOND POCINO	ANN TWOMEY
FRANCELINE EHRET	DOMINICK MARINO	JOHN POTTS	HARVEY WHILLE
ROY FOSTER	MATTHEW McCARTY	HETTY ROSENSTEIN	

October 7, 2013

Dear Members of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities:

Re: Please Support the PSE&G Energy Strong Program

We come before you today to advocate in support of PSE&G's energy strong program and to respectfully ask for your support. The New Jersey State AFL-CIO views this program as a "win-win" not only for our members in regard to the creation of good paying jobs, but for the state and residents as well, that will see a more reliable energy grid during times of crisis.

In regard to our membership, PSE&G has a long history of employing members of organized labor, both for their ongoing operations and for their construction projects. As the largest electric and gas utility in the state, when the company succeeds, it's workers succeed. Many of PSE&G's workers were on the front-lines working around the clock to restore service after each of the major storms of the past three years. Those workers saw first-hand the damage to the utility infrastructure and heard directly from customers when they were working street by street to restore service. They directly experienced customer's frustration and the dangers inherent in working around electric and gas facilities that needed to be repaired or replaced. And many of those workers are also customers, so they too experienced the inconvenience and disruptions from lengthy outages. Commissioner, workers and customers deserve to know that there is a plan in place to minimize the chances of these major disruptions in the future. PSE&G has put forward such a plan in its Energy Strong proposal.

The Energy Strong proposal can also benefit workers and New Jersey's economy by adding new jobs, as many as 5800 by PSE&G's estimate. The Great Recession supposedly was officially over in 2009. Well I can tell you, it is not yet over in New Jersey. New Jersey needs good paying, new jobs like the ones that Energy Strong will produce, and not many companies are offering them. PSE&G is.

We recognize and appreciate that some residents are concerned about paying more for their utility service. But during this debate, we need to keep in mind the significant costs associated with not acting, including the costs of spoiled food, worker over-time and the cost of bringing in workers from other states to help restore power. Furthermore, we need to consider the significant costs to businesses that cannot operate when the power is off or the hardships to their customers whose lives are put on hold. Of course, we need to consider the human costs of increased risk of injuries that workers confront every time they are dispatched when the storms subside to put the network back together. These are the types of costs that we need to anticipate if we do nothing or don't do enough to fix this problem.

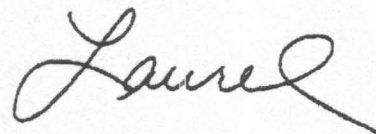
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The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is working to ensure that our state's energy infrastructure is better able to withstand the many anticipated "super storms" of the future and believe being fully prepared for them should be a top priority for our State Government. We hope the BPU agrees and takes a step forward toward this goal by endorsing the Energy Strong program. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you and we respectfully ask for your support.

Sincerely,



Charles Wowkanech
President



Laurel Brennan
Secretary-Treasurer

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OPEIU:153