



LONG ISLAND FEDERATION OF LABOR, AFL-CIO

**STATEMENT BY ROGER CLAYMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LONG ISLAND FEDERATION OF LABOR, AFL-CIO
TO THE NEW YORK STATE ENERGY PLANNING BOARD**

March 3, 2014

On behalf of the Long Island Federation of Labor, representing 250,000 union members and their families on Long Island, I would like to thank the New York State Energy Planning Board for this opportunity to comment on the New York State Energy Plan. We hope you will consider the voices of Long Islanders, who have recently experienced firsthand the disruptions that natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy can cause to our fragile infrastructure and normal daily life. There is a much clearer understanding in this region today that energy choices are closely related to community health and safety, jobs, economic growth and climate change.

There is no clear consensus within our labor movement about the balance in our energy supply between fossil fuels and renewable energy sources. The reason for this is our commitment to representing our members employed by utilities currently powered by traditional fuels. We hope you will keep the issue of good jobs at the forefront of your thinking about our energy future – jobs associated with power plants, electrical and gas transmission, and maintenance of these facilities. The unionized jobs in this sector are the foundation of economic vitality in communities across New York State, including jobs in call centers which are a lifeline between the utilities and the public.

At the same time we recognize that climate change is real. It affects our membership, not only as citizens and consumers, but also as workers. Our members were on the front lines of the devastation and clean-up from Hurricane Sandy; many are still repairing their homes and recovering financially.

Our labor movement is fully committed to the green economy and the vast potential that lies before us to create new jobs and protect the planet. Our members are already engaged in every aspect of the growing solar industry. We believe that developing our offshore wind energy resources as well will serve as a major local economic stimulus, creating not just jobs but careers for New Yorkers. We recognize the necessity of developing wind and solar power as well as rebuilding the electrical grid. Utilizing American made steel and glass and manufacturing wind turbines in this country could produce hundreds of thousands of jobs.

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By planning now for the transmission and generation of offshore wind energy, New York can be sure that this great resource will provide reliable clean energy to the public and substantial job opportunities to our skilled workforce for decades.

Studies by the Department of State and NYSERDA have concluded that New York has an offshore wind capacity of several thousand megawatts. There is a potential to create thousands of jobs associated with ports, vessels, component manufacturing, installation and maintenance. We believe Long Island is ideally placed to become a hub for offshore wind development considering its geography, access to skilled trades, manufacturing and the potential to develop port facilities.

Offshore wind's experience in Europe has shown that countries that go first, like the United Kingdom, get the benefit of an advanced industrial base and a large number of jobs. The UK started building offshore wind in 2001. Today, there are thousands of people employed, with projections for up to 45,000 people working in offshore wind in the UK in the next decade.

We urge the Energy Planning Board to stay on course with its targets for renewable energy in New York. Without clear goals and timetables, green jobs in a new economy are unlikely to be created. We ask you to keep good jobs in mind throughout this discussion and ensure that offshore wind energy plays a major role in generating clean energy for New York in the years ahead.