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STATEWIDE BUSINESS GROUPS TO NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY: PASS ENERGIZE NEW YORK

Syracuse, NY-In response to Governor Paterson's announcement that he is calling the Legislature back to address unfinished business, statewide business groups have joined together in urging the Assembly to immediately take up and pass Energize New York. Energize New York, a long term fully sustainable energy economic development power program bill, has been endorsed by the Administration, and previously passed the Senate this session with overwhelming support. To date, Assembly leadership has refused to bring the critical bill to the floor for a vote.

This issue has risen in urgency with the already expired short term Power for Jobs, Energy Cost Savings benefits and High Load Factor Programs that were discontinued over a month ago. If the current programs expire without a long term solution passed, businesses statewide will be heavily impacted, seeing an immediate sharp rise in their electricity costs, already some of the highest in the nation. If not addressed immediately, a lapse in energy benefits, coupled with the high costs of doing business in New York State and our current economic crisis will cause catastrophic results to the state's economy, including employee layoffs, downsizing, relocation and potential closings.

Energize New York has already received praise and overwhelming support from businesses and economic development organizations statewide. Supporters understand that a long term program will assist New York State in weaving through this current economic crisis by supporting jobs and critical businesses that sustain our economy, produce vast economic benefits to the State, allow businesses to make long term investments, and make New York State more competitive in retaining businesses to open or relocate to our State. The Energize New York bill also contains substantial retroactive language, meaning businesses would be held harmless for any high costs of electricity they may encounter during the current lapse in the preexisting short term Power for Jobs programs.

Of additional importance, the Energize New York bill has received overwhelming bipartisan support in the Senate, passing with a vote of 59-2, with cosponsors Senator Aubertine (D-Cape Vincent) and Senator Maziarz (R-Newfane) leading the charge. The Administration also publicly endorses Energize New York. Governor Paterson made this point known when he released his list of unfinished and important items to be addressed this week, and included Energize New York as one of these issues.

Following the Governor's agenda announcement with Energize New York listed as legislation to address this week, the following statewide business leaders provided the following statements in support of the New York State Assembly passing Energize New York:

Randy Wolken, President of MACNY, The Manufacturers Association stated, "*Energize New York is a sustainable and long term economic development power program that will assist New York State in addressing this current fiscal crisis. This crucial legislation must be passed by the Assembly this week. Energize New York will support jobs and critical businesses that sustain our economy, produce vast economic benefits to the State, allow manufacturers and businesses to make long term investments, and make New York State more competitive in retaining businesses. The Administration and the Senate have both recognized the need and the overwhelming benefits to the Statewide manufacturing community from Energize New York, and represented what was best for their constituents and the State's future by passing and supporting this bill. The Assembly needs to take action, and do so immediately. Otherwise, residents and business alike will have no choice but to continue to take their silence as a lack of support for sustaining their jobs.*"

Kenneth Adams, President & CEO of The Business Council of New York State, Inc. stated, *“New York needs a permanent economic development power program now. Competitively priced power is crucial for employers and workers across New York, and particularly for upstate manufacturers. We support legislation that has already passed the Senate with broad, bipartisan support, and deserves broad Assembly support as well. A permanent power program will support hundreds of energy-intensive businesses and tens of thousands of high paying jobs.”*

Andrew J. Rudnick, President & CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership stated, *“The Assembly must pass Energize NY this week. The Assembly’s inaction on this bill has left thousands of jobs at risk and brought economic development to a screeching halt – all during a time when jobs and private sector development are needed more than ever. Energize NY is the best approach for creating a long-term and sustainable economic development power program for New York.”*

Brian McMahon, Executive Director of The New York State Economic Development Council stated, *“The Governor and Senate have shown great vision and bi-partisan leadership in crafting a permanent replacement for the Power for Jobs Program. Energize New York would provide a reliable low cost source of electricity to qualifying New York businesses. If passed by the Assembly, it could become the State’s most important business retention and expansion tool.”*

Julie Suarez, Director of Public Policy for New York Farm Bureau said, *“New York Farm Bureau is generally concerned about the overall business climate for New York farms and food processors, particularly our out of whack energy costs as compared to many other states and nations”. “Energize New York would go a long way towards leveling the playing field for many of our food processors, and generally keeps farms on an even footing and opens the door towards many of our members qualifying for this new program.”*

Mike Elmendorf, New York State Director of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), New York's leading small business advocacy organization stated, *“Every business requires energy to operate, and New York's high energy costs are a major barrier to job creation and a significant contributor to our second highest in the nation cost of doing business. Small business owners are troubled by their rising energy costs. In a recent NFIB Small Business Problems & Priorities report, electrical rates were ranked among the top ten issues confronting small business. In New York, our energy costs are the third highest in the nation. It is critical that the Governor and Legislature come together on a bi-partisan basis to develop and enact a program for more affordable power for job creation in the Empire State.”*

Harold King, Executive Director of the Council of Industry of Southeastern New York stated, *“Based on action alone, the Council of Industry’s collective membership of manufacturers recognizes that the Senate and Administration see their jobs and the manufacturing sector’s survival in New York State not only as a priority, but as a key component to helping New York State regain its financial footing. My hope is that after this week, our membership can say the same of the Assembly. I urge the Assembly to take a cue from the Senate and Administration, and seek immediate action to pass this vital legislation that will secure this important long term economic development power program.”*

Robert M. Simpson, President & CEO of CenterState CEO stated, *“With all of the challenges businesses in New York face, our members see the Energize New York program as a common sense, long term solution to economic development power for the entire state. The Legislature and the Governor have the solution in hand, right now, to permanently remedy the years of cost and policy uncertainty that have plagued businesses that are energy dependent. We urge them to complete passage of this crucial legislation this week.”*

Rick Maxa, Chairman of the Corning Area Chamber of Commerce stated, *“As a partner in Kenneth Crosby, an Industrial Distribution Company with 4 branches located across NYS, we deal with a variety of manufacturers. All of our customers use a significant amount of energy in the production of their products. Having been in this business for 30 years I have watched our manufacturers leave our state due to the high cost of doing business, a critical*

component of that cost is the high cost of energy. I urge you to move 'Energize NY' through the assembly overwhelmingly as the Senate has already done."

Michael White, Executive Director of the Long Island Regional Planning Council stated, *"The Energize N Y Power Program will keep businesses from leaving the State, provide the benefit of renewable hydropower to all of the State and foster critical links between the upstate and downstate economy to bring job growth with a return on the State's investment of this valuable resource."*

F. Michael Tucker, President & CEO of the Center for Economic Growth (CEG) added, *"In order to compete effectively in the global arena, we need to pass and implement Energize New York, a fully sustainable, comprehensive, and long term economic development power program. This legislation provides a unique opportunity to create an economic development tool that would enable manufacturers and businesses to sustain and create jobs that are so desperately needed during these difficult fiscal times. I encourage the Assembly to take necessary action and pass this critical piece of legislation this week."*

Garry Douglas, President of the Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce said, *"High energy costs continue to be one of the key stumbling blocks to business and job growth in New York. Now more than ever, we need to move forward, not backward, in helping with these costs in connection with the retention and creation of much needed employment in this state. Assembly action without further delay is critical. We must reverse New York's economic decline, and this would be one step in that direction."*

Rob Robinson, President & CEO of The Otsego County Chamber stated, *"If New York is to start turning this economy around, our elected leaders must help businesses to reduce costs, not passing this bill is NOT an option!"*

David Bomke, Executive Director of The New York Energy Consumers Council stated, *"The New York Energy Consumers Council, Inc. (NYECC) continues to affirm that the resources of the Empire State must be used to their fullest capacity to support the entire State. Just as the wealth derived from New York City's financial industry has helped finance the generating plants that capture energy from our upstate waterways, the electricity generated from those plants should be made available to energize the entire State's economy -- helping to deliver and retain jobs across the entire breadth of New York State."*

Mark Eagan, President & CEO of the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce said, *"The passage of the Energize New York bill is essential to ensure the growth and prosperity of the business community throughout New York State. This fully sustainable program will provide a long-term solution to the energy needs of businesses statewide, effectively reducing energy costs while significantly expanding economic development opportunities and creating tens of thousands of high-tech, high-paying jobs."*

Lou Santoni, President & CEO of The Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce stated, *"Businesses who make a decision to remain and invest in New York State need the proper economic development tools to help them in growing their business. The passage and implementation of Energize New York will provide New York State business with one such tool. I encourage the New York State Assembly to take this important piece of legislation up and pass it immediately."*

Bob Haight, Executive Director of The Cortland County Chamber of Commerce said, *"Our #1 business concern is the rising cost of doing business in NYS. We need to pass this legislation in order to keep one of our major costs in line, energy. Our Assembly must act now!"*

About the Organizations

MACNY, the Manufacturers Association, represents over 330 companies in a twenty-four county region in Upstate New York. The 97-year-old organization provides human resource services, training, purchasing solutions, networking opportunities and advocacy support for its members.

The Business Council of New York State, Inc. is a statewide business organization representing the interests of large and small firms throughout the state. Its membership is made up of thousands of member companies, as well as local chambers of commerce and professional and trade associations.

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership includes nearly 2,500 employer members, working for improved business competitiveness and expanded economic activity in the region. The Partnership advocates, locally, and in Albany, and Washington, D.C., for policies and resources to increase private sector investment and jobs.

The New York State Economic Development Council is the state's principal organization representing economic development professionals. Our 900 members include the leadership of Industrial Development Agencies, Local Development Corporations, commercial and investment banks, underwriters, bond counsels, utilities, chambers of commerce and private corporations.

The New York Farm Bureau is the largest statewide agricultural advocacy organization with a mission to “Serve and Strengthen Agriculture”, with almost 30,000 member families engaged in farming and food related occupations.

The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) is New York and the nation’s leading small business advocacy association, representing more than 10,000 members statewide.

The Council of Industry of Southeastern New York represents over 125 manufacturers and businesses for over 100 years. The Council of Industry has been serving the Hudson Valley manufacturing community in areas such as human resources, training and advocacy.

CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEO) is a non-profit regional growth organization serving individuals, businesses and communities across twelve counties in the heart of New York State. CenterState CEO works to achieve economic growth and prosperity through partnerships, planning and problem-solving.

The Corning Area Chamber of Commerce as a member driven business resource organization serves the interests of 300+ businesses through advocacy, member services and community enhancement.

The Long Island Regional Planning Council is a regional planning council established under the NYS General Municipal Law to represent the various interests and needs of all Long Islanders in providing education, research, planning, advocacy and leadership for the Nassau- Suffolk Region on important issues affecting the quality of life on Long Island for the express purpose of promoting the physical, economic and social health of the Region.

Center of Economic Growth (CEG) is a private, not-for-profit organization committed to fostering visionary economic growth throughout the 11-county Capital Region, as well as a significant portion of the Tech Valley corridor.

The Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce is the largest business and economic development organization in northern New York and one of the five largest chambers in New York State, representing more than 3,500 member companies across Clinton, Franklin, Essex and northern Warren Counties.

The Otsego County Chamber represents over 600 businesses from mostly Otsego County and the surrounding areas, as well as New York State businesses that want to be part of our regional economy.

The New York Energy Consumers Council is the largest energy customer advocacy organization in New York State. A non profit organization, members of NYECC represent a broad spectrum of energy buyers, including hospitals, universities, financial institutions, residential and commercial property managers, public benefit corporations, energy service companies, and energy consumers or groups of consumers in Con Edison's service territory.

The Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce is made up of 2,400 businesses and organizations of all types and sizes and from throughout the region that knows they will prosper and grow in a vibrant business environment.

The Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce represents over 850 businesses all of Broome County, including Binghamton, Vestal, Endicott, Endwell, Windsor, Conklin, Kirkwood, Town of Binghamton, Harpursville, Chenango Forks, Chenango Valley, etc.

The Cortland County Chamber of Commerce is an independent, not-for profit organization that serves its collective membership of over 450 businesses in and around Cortland County.

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