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NYS Public Service Commission and NYSERDA Hold Low-Income Forum on Energy 2018 Statewide Conference

State Initiatives Address Affordability and Environmental Impacts Faced by New York's Vulnerable Residents

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), today began the two-day biennial Low-Income Forum on Energy (LIFE) 2018 Statewide Conference in Albany to address issues related to energy affordability for the state's low-income residents.

The Conference was opened by Chair of the PSC John Rhodes and President and CEO of NYSERDA Alicia Barton who both stressed the importance of continued state leadership and support for programs that protect New York's most vulnerable residents. The LIFE Conference brings together organizations and individuals committed to addressing the energy-related challenges and opportunities facing low-income New Yorkers and is part of the LIFE Initiative, which in its 20th year, is the nation's longest-running statewide discussion on the energy needs of the low-income community. The LIFE Initiative and conference support Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's innovative Reforming the Energy Vision strategy which is spurring clean energy innovation and improving statewide consumer choice and affordability to ensure all residents are able to participate in the transition to a clean economy.

"Members of my family who worked at the Bethlehem Steel plant in Western New York would have never imagined that one day wind turbines would rise up from that site to power homes and businesses," **said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul.** "I have seen the energy transformation that is happening right before our very eyes in communities across our state. An important part of our clean energy transition is ensuring low-income New Yorkers have access to the latest technologies and energy efficiency upgrades. Thanks to continued investment from New York State, we are making this a reality, and helping low-income families make ends meet by reducing energy bills and improving home energy efficiency."

Chair of the New York State Public Service Commission John B. Rhodes said, "Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, the Public Service Commission, NYSERDA and our statewide partners are working to ensure we deliver an affordable, clean and resilient energy system for all New Yorkers.

The LIFE Conference provides the unique opportunity for service providers, community leaders and policymakers to meet and share their expertise and experiences in helping low-income energy customers become fully engaged in this process.”

NYSERDA President and CEO Alicia Barton said, “Improving access to clean energy solutions for low-income residents will not only lower their monthly energy bills but also bring environmental and health benefits to local communities. The LIFE Conference is another example of how the state continues to identify approaches for connecting our most vulnerable communities to clean energy service providers and solutions which underscores Governor Cuomo’s call to make energy more affordable for all New Yorkers.”

The Conference features more than 45 discussion and training sessions for contractors, community-based organizations, and attorneys. Attendees will learn new skills and expertise on energy assistance programs, low-income energy policy, emerging issues, and best practices.

New York State’s low-income population includes nearly 2.3 million households earning less than 60 percent of the Area Median Income (or \$53,000 for a family of four). Low-income residents will benefit from the transformation of the state’s energy system by Governor Cuomo’s Reforming the Energy Vision strategy to build a resilient, clean and affordable energy system for all New Yorkers and the \$5 billion Clean Energy Fund which targets market-based incentives that will generate investments in clean and affordable energy to help connect the state’s most vulnerable residents to clean energy programs.

To ensure that all New Yorkers have access to clean and cost-effective energy, the state has been advancing energy initiatives that will benefit low-income residents. Included among those are:

- The [New Efficiency: New York](#) proposal which was announced by Governor Cuomo last month as the result of a directive the Governor made in his 2018 State of the State Address for DPS and NYSERDA to develop a 2025 energy efficiency target to propel the state toward achieving important energy and environmental goals including reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030. The proposal emphasizes energy affordability and includes solutions for advancing energy efficiency in affordable multifamily housing, improving coordination of programs and resources at all levels, and establishing innovative models for increasing efficiency of manufactured housing and leveraging energy and health investments.
- Another 2018 State of the State priority Governor Cuomo outlined was the Solar for All program which will build on the highly successful Community Solar initiative by expanding solar access to low-income New Yorkers. It will use NYSERDA’s purchasing power to secure Community Solar subscriptions for low-income customers at no-cost to deliver cost savings and clean energy to more than 10,000 low-income New Yorkers. The first step of the program is expected to be completed this week with an RFP being available for developers to submit community solar projects that will provide no-cost subscriptions to program participants. For more information, visit NYSERDA’s [website](#).

Under this program, NYSERDA will also continue working with private and public stakeholders to develop ongoing strategies for how the program can better serve low-income communities.

The Conference will also recognize the 2018 LIFE Achievement Awards for individuals who have made a long-lasting commitment in the field of energy affordability by working to address the challenges that low-income residents face when seeking access to energy solutions.

LIFE was established by DPS and NYSERDA to help address the issues confronting low-income consumers in New York's evolving energy landscape. LIFE hosts the statewide conference and a series of regional meetings across New York State during alternate years. Visit the [NYSERDA website](#) for more information.

Reforming the Energy Vision

Reforming the Energy Vision is Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's strategy to lead on climate change and grow New York's economy. REV is building a cleaner, more resilient and affordable energy system for all New Yorkers by stimulating investment in clean technologies like solar, wind, and energy efficiency and requiring 50 percent of the state's electricity needs from renewable energy by 2030. Already, REV has driven growth of more than 1,000 percent in the statewide solar market, improved energy affordability for 1.65 million low-income customers, and created thousands of jobs in manufacturing, engineering, and other clean tech sectors. REV is ensuring New York reduces statewide greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030 and achieves the internationally recognized target of reducing emissions 80 percent by 2050. To learn more about REV, including the Governor's \$5 billion investment in clean energy technology and innovation, visit rev.ny.gov, follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

About the New York State Public Service Commission

The primary mission of the New York State Department of Public Service is to ensure affordable, safe, secure, and reliable access to electric, gas, steam, telecommunications, and water services for New York State's residential and business consumers, while protecting the natural environment. The Department also seeks to stimulate effective competitive markets that benefit New York consumers through strategic investments, as well as product and service innovations. To learn more about NYSPSC, visit dps.ny.gov or follow us on [Twitter](#), or [Facebook](#).

About NYSERDA

NYSERDA, a public benefit corporation, offers objective information and analysis, innovative programs, technical expertise, and funding to help New Yorkers increase energy efficiency, save money, use renewable energy, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. NYSERDA professionals work to protect the environment and create clean-energy jobs. NYSERDA has been developing partnerships to advance innovative energy solutions in New York State since 1975. To learn more about NYSERDA's programs and funding opportunities, visit nyserdera.ny.gov or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), or [Instagram](#).

About LIFE

The Low-Income Forum on Energy (LIFE) is a unique statewide dialogue that brings together organizations and individuals committed to addressing the challenges and opportunities facing low-income New Yorkers as they seek safe, affordable and reliable energy. Supported by the New York State Public Service Commission and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), LIFE encourages an interactive exchange of information and collaboration among the programs and resources that assist low-income energy consumers.