

The Business Council of Westchester

2016 Legislative Agenda

Anthony J. Justic, *Chairman of the Board*

Dr. Marsha Gordon, *President/CEO*

George Lence, *Vice Chair Governmental Action*

John Ravitz, *Executive Vice President/COO*



BUSINESSCOUNCIL**OF**WESTCHESTER

Build. Connect. Win.



White House

Barack Obama, *President*

Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *Vice President*

United States Senate

Charles E. Schumer

Kirsten Gillibrand

United States House of Representatives

16th C.D. Eliot L. Engel

17th C.D. Nita M. Lowey

18th C.D. Sean Patrick Maloney

New York State Statewide Public Officials

Andrew M. Cuomo, *Governor*

Kathy Hochul, *Lt Governor*

Thomas DiNapoli, *Comptroller*

Eric T. Schneiderman, *Attorney General*

State Senate

34th S.D. Jeff Klein

35th S.D. Andrea Stewart Cousins

36th S.D. Ruth Hassell-Thompson

37th S.D. George Latimer

40th S.D. Terrence Murphy

State Assembly

88th A.D. Amy Paulin

89th A.D. J. Gary Pretlow

90th A.D. Shelly Mayer

91st A.D. Steve Otis

92nd A.D. Thomas J. Abinanti

93rd A.D. David Buchwald

94th A.D. Steve Katz

95th A.D. Sandra R. Galef

Westchester County Public Officials

Robert P. Astorino, *County Executive*

Timothy Idoni, *County Clerk*

James McCarty, *Acting District Attorney*

Board of Legislators

1st District John G. Testa

2nd District Francis T. Corcoran

3rd District Margaret A. Cunzio

4th District Michael B. Kaplowitz,
Chairman

5th District Benjamin Boykin

6th District David B. Gelfarb

7th District Catherine Parker

8th District Alfreda A. Williams

9th District Catherine Borgia

10th District Sheila Marcotte

11th District James Maisano,
Vice Chairman

12th District Mary Jane Shimsky

13th District Lyndon Williams

14th District Bernice Spreckman

15th District Gordon A. Burrows

16th District Kenneth W. Jenkins

17th District Virginia Perez

Mayors

Richard Thomas, *Mt. Vernon*

Noam Bramson, *New Rochelle*

Frank Catalina, *Peekskill*

Thomas Roach, *White Plains*

Mike Spano, *Yonkers*



The Business Council of Westchester works to enhance profitability, wealth and economic opportunity for all in Westchester County.

OVERVIEW

The Business Council of Westchester (BCW) is the county’s premier business membership and advocacy organization. The Business Council of Westchester’s top priority is to help create economic growth and enhance profitability, wealth and economic opportunity for all in Westchester County.

The Business Council of Westchester represents 1,000 members, ranging in size from multinational corporations, leading global biotech companies, professional service firms, hospitals and universities, mid-size businesses, not-for-profit organizations and small business owners in every sector of the county’s diverse economy. The members represent 200,000 employees in Westchester County and beyond. Moreover the members have helped drive the county’s economy.

The Business Council of Westchester has grown to be the largest and most influential business organization in the county because of the open, inclusive and collaborative culture fostered through the involvement of its members along with the leadership of a diverse and dedicated Board of Directors. Many of the Business Council members conduct business on a regional, state-wide, national and international level, which has served to create opportunities for business growth in Westchester. The Business Council takes great pride that its members fuel Westchester’s economy.

The Business Council of Westchester is a private-not-for-profit corporation funded by annual investments by its members.



BCW members represent over

200,000

employees in Westchester County and beyond.

PHOTO Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino briefs BCW Board Members on his 2016 economic development priorities.

Government Action Council

IMPROVED BUSINESS CLIMATE

The Mission of the Business Council of Westchester's Government Action Council is to provide leadership in public policy and involve our members in helping to advocate for economic opportunity in Westchester County.

To accomplish this, the Government Action Council will:

- Educate and inform the business community about relevant county, state and federal policy issues.
- Review county, state and federal legislation and regulations to assess potential impacts on the business community.
- Influence public policy outcomes through advocacy when the business community's interest may be affected.
- Serve as an information resource and clearinghouse for the business community and governmental leaders.
- Leverage public policy issues and legislation to promote business growth and create a more competitive business environment.
- Look beyond the borders of Westchester County to address regional issues impacting the business community.

The Business Council works with local, state and federal elected officials to convert legislative goals into reality.

WHY A BUSINESS COUNCIL OF WESTCHESTER LEGISLATIVE AGENDA?

Every year, legislative bills that are passed or not passed in local, state and federal legislatures have a powerful impact on the business community's ability to serve its stakeholders. Business leaders-whether they represent large, medium or small sized companies owe it to themselves, their employees and their shareholders (if they work for a publicly traded company), to offer their opinion and expertise on policy issues and how they are governed.

In order to address this critical responsibility, The Business Council of Westchester's Government Action Council presents a legislative agenda each year to which all members are encouraged





to offer their suggestions. The Business Council also works with local, state and federal elected officials to convert legislative goals into reality. Included in this overall effort is the Business Council's annual visit to the State Capitol in Albany at the beginning of the legislative session, meeting with lawmakers on the county, state and federal levels throughout the year, urging the Governor to either support or veto legislation that has passed both houses of the State Legislature and communicate our positions to the media and other interested parties to ensure that the voice of the business community is heard. These actions have enabled The Business Council of Westchester to positively influence legislative and regulatory action.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

In 2016, Government at all levels will face numerous challenges that will force them to make difficult choices in how resources are allocated. Providing essential services and making long overdue infrastructure investments must be done with sound prudent fiscal management and without relying on additional borrowing and fiscal gimmicks.

The Business Council of Westchester will continue to call for fundamental reforms in the way our county, state and federal governments conduct business. We will continue to urge our elected officials to adopt public policies that will lead to sustainable economic growth that creates new jobs and an accelerated and lasting economic recovery.

The Business Council of Westchester looks forward to continuing meaningful discussions with our county, state and federal elected officials on numerous issues to ensure that the collective voice of the county's business community is heard.

LEFT BCW Governmental Action Council Chair George Lence, Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul, BCW Board Chairman Tony Justic, BCW President & CEO Marsha Gordon and BCW Executive VP & COO John Ravitz.

RIGHT BCW holds reception for new mayor of Mt. Vernon. Joe Apicella, VP for MacQuesten Inc.; Marsha Gordon; Mayor Richard Thomas; Tom DeCaro, Benchmark Title Agency.



County

CONTINUING THE SERIOUS EFFORTS TO CUT GOVERNMENT SPENDING

The Business Council of Westchester commends Westchester County lawmakers on the passage of a fiscally responsible \$1.8 billion budget that once again did not raise taxes, kept spending flat, protected essential services, and protected the county's bond rating, which is critical to attracting and retaining employers in Westchester County. The budget sent a strong message to the business community that Westchester County's government is serious about creating an environment where businesses can grow and prosper.

Westchester County needs to continue to pass budgets that are built on fiscal integrity and sound principles. The Business Council of Westchester applauds the ongoing bi-partisan work that is being done to strike the right balance for businesses, taxpayers and those who rely on important social services. It is also important to note that by continuing to deliver on-time balanced budgets the County Executive and the Board of Legislators are proving that Westchester is a business friendly county.

The Business Council of Westchester will continue to advocate for sound structural reforms that are important to strengthening the county's long-term financial condition. This will require continuing to identify recurring benefits and savings, concessions from labor unions in future contract negotiations, treating reserve funds judiciously, consensus revenue projections and consolidating services between local governments.

The Business Council of Westchester supports a streamlined government, with as much privatization as possible and the use of not-for-profit agencies as a more cost effective alternative for delivering services. The Business Council of Westchester continues to support the work the county's Local Development Corporation, which has helped small businesses and not-for-profits receive necessary funding.

BCW will continue to advocate for sound structural reforms that are important to strengthening the county's long-term financial condition.



LEFT White Plains Mayor Tom Roach addresses the business community on his city's economic development goals for 2016 at the BCW's KeyBank Breakfast Series.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

One of The Business Council of Westchester's ongoing priorities will be to continue its leadership role on workforce development issues through its partnership with the Westchester/Putnam Development Board to help connect the county's future workforce to the business community. Every year, the Business Council's Workforce Development Programs helps place hundreds of young adults in jobs. The Business Council also developed the Westchester/Putnam Internship Connex website, a one-stop portal connecting local college students with internship opportunities.

In 2016, The Business Council's responsibilities in managing the county's workforce development program increased with the passage of new federal workforce development legislation, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Under WIOA, The Business Council will continue to work directly with employers to place young adults in their first employment setting through different work experiences including: summer and year-round employment, mentoring sessions, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, on-the-job training and job shadowing.

In 2015, The Business Council of Westchester held its 4th Annual Youth Summit titled "Building Blocks for Success". 300 young adults attended the summit which included interactive skill building activities to help the participants gain a better understanding on how to prepare themselves for joining the workforce. By using the latest technology and social media platforms, summit attendees learned in a responsible manner how to create their personal brand which will help them explore future job opportunities. The event had numerous local business leaders participate with executives from different industries leading workshops throughout the day.

RIGHT Participants from the 2015 BCW Annual Youth Summit. *ABOVE* Registering for the numerous workshops held that day.



County (continued)

GREEN BUSINESS PROGRAM - WESTCHESTER GREEN BUSINESS CHALLENGE & WESTCHESTER GREEN BUSINESS-CERTIFIED

The Business Council of Westchester has partnered with Westchester County and Green Team Spirit since 2009 on the Westchester Green Business Challenge (WGBC), a nationally recognized green business engagement program that helps Westchester organizations become environmentally sustainable, while improving performance and saving money. Con Edison has been the program's Platinum Sponsor since inception.

The Green Business program helps Westchester organizations become environmentally sustainable while improving performance and saving money.

To date, over 300 local businesses have joined the WGBC, which expanded in 2014 to include the region's only green business certification program. Members of Westchester Green Business-Certified receive enhanced tools to measure their performance, unique opportunities for peer collaboration, hands-on support from program staff and a higher level of recognition as leaders within their industries. There are currently 52 member organizations, 18 of which have achieved certification. More information can be found online at westchestergreenbusinesscertified.org.

Notable accomplishments from the past year include:

Launch of New Leaders in Sustainability Speaker Series

A new four-part series was launched in partnership with Westchester Community College to shine the spotlight on business leaders that have achieved Westchester Green Business Certification. The first two events on "How Westchester Business Leaders Inspire Organizational Sustainability" and "Turning Energy Challenges into Business Opportunities" were resounding successes.

Successful 2015 Recognition Event

Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino and Dr. Marsha Gordon, President and CEO of The Business Council of Westchester, hosted the Westchester Green Business Challenge's 5th Annual Recognition Event and Awards Ceremony at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in White Plains. Joined by WGBC Program Directors Dani Glaser and Scott Fernqvist, organizers recognized a prestigious group of Westchester organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to environmental sustainability.



2015 winners in their respective categories include:

- CHARLES W. BROWN, JR. SUSTAINABILITY AWARD: Arc of Westchester (Hawthorne)
- OUTREACH & ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: Suburban Carting Company (Briarcliff Manor)
- ENERGY: Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Tarrytown)
- WASTE MANAGEMENT & GREEN PRODUCTS: Allied Converters, Inc. (New Rochelle)
- TRANSPORTATION: Diamond Properties, LLC (Mt. Kisco)
- LAND USE & WATER: Purchase College, State University of New York (Purchase)

Westchester Green Business Certification Ceremonies (WGB-Certified)

Celebration ceremonies were held across Westchester County to honor those members that achieved Westchester Green Business Certification, including:

Allied Converters
Arc of Westchester
Atlantic Westchester
C.W. Brown, a division of Iechase
Crowne Plaza Hotel White Plains
Diamond Properties
Gallin Beeler Design
Hendrick Hudson Free Library
MetroPool
Montefiore New Rochelle

Montefiore Mount Vernon
New York-Presbyterian/Westchester Division
Purchase College
Reckson, a division of SL Green
Regeneron Pharmaceuticals
Smiles on Hudson
SunBlue Energy
The Blue Pig Ice Cream

ABOVE WGBC Bronze Sponsors and WGBC-Certified participants at the 2015 WGBC Recognition Event and Awards Ceremony hosted by County Executive Rob Astorino and Marsha Gordon.

RIGHT Panelists and Program Partners at the WGBC Leaders in Sustainability Speaker Series.





New York State

The Business Council of Westchester continues to advocate for improvements in the overall business climate and reductions in the broad cost of doing business that will spur economic development and job creation. The impact on taxes, business fees, burdensome regulatory requirements and lengthy approval processes are of particular concern.

It is essential that the state must make serious efforts to reduce costs for job creators, taxpayers, local government and school districts.

FISCAL REFORM

The Business Council of Westchester has had a leadership role on calling for the adoption of necessary steps that are needed to solve the state's structural and ongoing fiscal problems. It is essential that the state must make serious efforts to reduce costs for job creators, taxpayers, local government and school districts. To that end, The Business Council of Westchester will forcefully continue to advocate for strong mandate relief legislation during the 2016 legislative session.

Presently there are too many state laws and regulations that contribute to the high costs of local government. This year Westchester County's budget will consume 75 cents of every dollar in the 2016 County budget due to unfunded state and federal mandates. In total these unfunded mandates from Albany and Washington add up to \$900 million. Albany must make mandate relief a top priority this year and The Business Council of Westchester will continue to meet with the members of the Westchester State Legislative delegation to urge them to concentrate on passing meaningful mandate relief legislation.

In addition to Mandate Relief it is incumbent on the State Legislature to:

- **Continue to create enhanced tax credits** for small businesses and adopt new small business tax reform policies that encourage businesses to have the resources to grow in New York State.





- **Make the pension system more predictable and affordable.** The state should allow local governments and school districts the ability to manage their current and future pension costs. The Business Council of Westchester will continue to urge the creation of a plan that allows employees the option of a reduced (affordable) defined benefit plan and defined contribution plan that is controlled by the employees and does not unduly burden tax payers.
- **Reduce the cost of construction on public-private projects;** the state must reduce the cost of construction by repealing the Wicks Law and reforming the public Construction Act.
- **Continue to pass on-time budgets.** The Business Council of Westchester urges the Governor and the State Legislature to continue the successes they have had over the past five years adopting an on-time balanced budget. Showing this fiscal discipline, which had not been seen in Albany in years, has sent a positive message to the business community that Albany does have its fiscal house in order.
- **Reform the Scaffold Law.** Reforming this law will continue to be one of the major legislative priorities for the Business Council of Westchester in 2016. New York is the only state in the country that holds property owners, employers and contractors absolutely liable for “gravity related” injuries that happen on the job. There is virtually no defense from a lawsuit even if the worker’s gross negligence contributed to the accident.

ABOVE BCW Government Action Council group at the 2015 Albany Lobby Day.

RIGHT NYS Senate Majority Leader Senator John Flanagan appearing at the BCW's political leadership series.



New York State (continued)

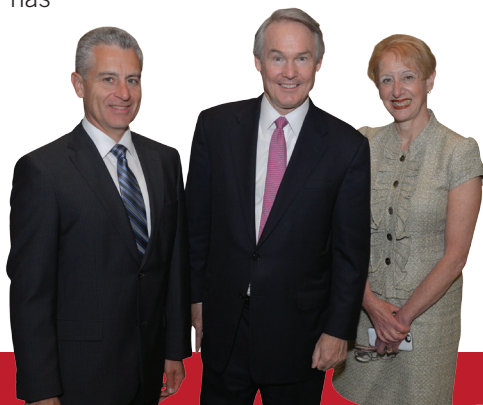
As the law now stands now, even parties that had no supervisory control over the work are held liable. The increasingly dramatic fiscal ramification of the scaffold law is that it is costing New York taxpayers \$785 million annually.

In addition:

- a) The Scaffold Law is estimated to add \$200-\$400 million in additional costs to the construction of the new Tappan Zee Bridge.
- b) Local governments pay higher costs for capital projects, whether the work is done directly or through private contractors.
- c) More than half of the top 30 highest settlements resulted from Scaffold Law claims, and of those, 25% were against public entities.
- d) The Scaffold Law adds as much as \$10,000 to the cost of building a new home.
- e) In 2014, the New York School Construction Authority's insurance costs soared to \$240 million because of the Scaffold Law, nearly triple of the previous year, and no guarantee of coverage after 2014.
- f) Higher insurance costs for the School Construction Authority jeopardizes the future of their Owner-Controlled Insurance Program, which provides insurance to over 800 M/WBE firms. Without this program, hundreds of M/WBEs may be put out of business.

Over the last four years, BCW has taken a leadership role in a state-wide organized effort to reform the Scaffold Law which has included meeting with every member of the Westchester state delegation.

It is important to note that reforming the Scaffold Law would not diminish worker safety rules and regulations. Over the last four years, The Business Council of Westchester has taken a leadership role in a state-wide organized effort to reform the





Scaffold Law, which has included meeting with every member of the Westchester state delegation both in Albany and in their district offices. In 2016, The Business Council of Westchester will continue its efforts to ensure that the necessary reforms to this law finally gets passed by the State Legislature.

- **Prohibit New Mandates:** The state should not impose any new mandates on municipalities, school districts and taxpayers. The Business Council of Westchester urges the Governor and the Legislature to create meaningful legislation during the 2016 Legislative Session that focuses on already identified mandates that are detrimental to local municipalities.
- **Small Business Tax Reform:** There has been positive movement in recent years to adopt businesses tax reductions for small businesses. The Business Council of Westchester urges the Governor and State Legislature to continue in providing small businesses more tax cut opportunities.
- **The State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)** has been widely seen as causing serious delays to getting projects completed in a timely manner. This causes local municipalities to at times abandon economic development projects, which kills new jobs and revenue. The Business Council of Westchester again calls for the Governor and the Legislature to amend and in some cases eliminate the SEQR rules and regulations that have been documented to cause unnecessary delay for important projects from starting in New York State.

LEFT Secretary to the NYS Governor, Bill Mulrow, center, with Tony Justic and Marsha Gordon.

ABOVE NYS Senate Minority Leader Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins meets with members of the BCW Government Action Council attending the 2015 Albany Lobby Day.

New York State (continued)

- Passing legislation that would allow **Public Private Partnerships** (P3s) to be adopted in New York State. The Business Council of Westchester will continue to support legislation which would enable New York to be on the forefront of the public-private partnership movement, by authorizing private entities to design and build, finance operate and maintain public infrastructure assets. Public Private Partnerships would boost the economy in Westchester County by producing meaningful new jobs on projects that would bring major revenue to the county.
- **Regulatory Reform** - The Business Council of Westchester urges the Governor and the Legislature to act on a series of bills that eliminate unnecessary regulations that state agencies impose on businesses.

BCW will continue to support legislation which would enable New York to be at the forefront of the public-private partnerships, by authorizing private entities to design and build, finance operate and maintain public infrastructure assets.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Comparative employment trends continue to be the best available indicators of whether New York State's policies are fostering economic growth. New York State still has a lot of work to do to increase private sector job growth. We have seen some significant improvements in this area in both Westchester and the Hudson Valley Region. For the 12 month period ending December 2015, private sector employment in the Hudson Valley Region increased by 10,200 or 1.3 percent to 778,200 private sector jobs. Westchester's unemployment rate as of December 2015 was at a low of 4.0 percent.

The Business Council of Westchester will continue to advocate that the most effective economic development program is the creation of a more competitive business environment, which can only occur when New York State acts to lower state imposed taxes, fees, assessments and employer mandates. New





York State must do all that it can to remove these type of obstacles that only detract from business coming to New York or those that are already here staying and growing their business by creating more jobs. In other economic development areas:

- The Business Council of Westchester will be reaching out to our membership in early 2016 to discuss the Governor's proposal to increase the statewide minimum wage to \$15 an hour. It is imperative that the Governor and the State Legislature understand the immediate impact this proposal would have on businesses and non profits of all sizes in Westchester County and the rest of the state. The Business Council of Westchester will deliver the information we receive from our members directly to the Governor and the Legislature so that our member's voices can be heard during the debate on this issue.
- The Business Council of Westchester supports the Governor's continuation of the state's Regional Economic Development Councils, which for the last five years have helped create a comprehensive strategic plan that has catalyzed job creation and economic development in the state. In 2015, the Mid-Hudson Valley (which includes Westchester County) Region received \$90.4 million, which will be used for transformative and sustainable projects all across the region.
- The Business Council of Westchester supports the continuation of the state's qualified emerging technology company tax credit for capital operating training investments.
- The Business Council of Westchester supports adopting broad reforms in the state business tax to reduce compliance costs and make the state's tax code more supportive on in-state investments and job creation.

LEFT BCW members in the NYS Assembly Chamber during the 2015 Albany Lobby Day.

ABOVE The Westchester Business EXPO, the leading business to business trade show in the Hudson Valley, attracts over 1,800 attendees each year.

The 2016 EXPO will be held on March 17.

New York State (continued)

GAMING ENTERTAINMENT: NEW YORK IS WELL-POSITIONED TO LEAD THE INDUSTRY WORLDWIDE

Governor Cuomo laid out an ambitious \$150 billion spending plan calling for new investments in infrastructure, education and other state programs. While commendable, the plan has left many questioning regarding how to pay for it all. New taxes were not proposed and should not be considered. Billions in one-shot funds from bank settlements will help, but they don't reoccur or provide a reliable revenue stream. Westchester County can be a key component in helping to achieve these ambitious plans.

New York is perfectly positioned to grow and lead the gaming industry worldwide. Westchester County is home to one of the most prominent casinos and entertainment destinations in the tri-state area, Empire City Casino. With an annual payroll over \$45 million and more than 1,300 employees representing 14 unions, Empire City is critical to the economic growth of this county and the state as a whole. Each year residents statewide directly benefit from the nearly \$300 million Empire City generates for state education. Hundreds of millions of dollars more are generated for the horse racing industry, as well as state and local governments. These funds are a result of an effective 70% tax rate paid by Empire City to the state.

Gaming analysts worldwide have credited New York with having one of the most lucrative gaming models in the industry. Despite this, reports indicate that New York residents continue to spend more than \$3 billion annually in neighboring states on gaming entertainment. This staggering figure does not include spending by visiting tourists. We can and must do more to keep those dollars, and the accompanying jobs, in our state to benefit our residents.

The BCW will reach out to our membership in early 2016 to discuss the Governor's proposal to increase the statewide minimum wage to \$15 dollars an hour.



Neighboring states are expanding their gaming operations to capture more dollars from our residents and tourists with potential properties just minutes from Westchester, as nearby as northern New Jersey. New York is holding back the one sure thing we have that will generate the jobs and revenue needed to reduce property taxes, support infrastructure investments, and relieve the financial burdens on businesses. We can and should be using Empire City to draw tourists north into the Hudson Valley rather than losing those tourism gaming and entertainment dollars to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.

To add insult to injury, while New York casinos like Empire City are prevented from physically expanding to meet market demands, they're also prohibited from using technology to grow their business with such amenities as internet gaming. Yet legislators are considering permitting behemoths in the daily fantasy sports industry to utilize that very same technology for online wagering on sports to make hundreds of millions of dollars in profit, despite the absence of substantial in-state investment, job creation, or revenue generation by these companies that would benefit our residents.





New York State (continued)

We call on Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature to lift the moratorium that is preventing Empire City from developing to full potential as a destination resort and allowing it to create the jobs and revenue our residents need, while stemming the hemorrhage of New York dollars to neighboring states. We also call for the passage of legislation that permits New York casinos to harness technology to develop their businesses, beginning with online poker.

Furthermore, we implore the state to ensure a fair and level playing field for all entities as new gaming opportunities are developed, whether onsite or online.

There is a clear path to funding the bold and ambitious investments laid out by Governor Cuomo. Those investments are worthy and needed. Westchester County is pleased to be a key component in achieving these goals.

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ENERGY — MEETING NEW YORK'S POWER DEMANDS

New York State and Westchester County in particular, are a great place to live, work, grow a business and raise a family.

However, New York's energy future remains unsettled. The New York Independent System Operator, the independent entity tasked with ensuring the reliability of our energy system, reported that New York's energy demand will remain consistent through 2025 with an increase for electricity during the summer months. *(source: NYISO Gold Book 2015 p.5)*

The increase in the demand for energy occurs even with the implementation of various energy efficiency programs by the State of New York. In addition to reliability concerns, the rising cost of electricity continues to be a serious concern for consumers and small and large businesses. On average 26% of a consumer's electrical bill consists of state and local imposed taxes, fees and assessments.

A key to revitalizing New York's economy is making the State's energy costs more competitive. To secure New York's increasing energy demands and to ensure the continued revitalization of New York's economy, the Business Council of Westchester recommends the following energy policies:

1. Support the Continued Operation of the Indian Point Energy Center

The Westchester-based Indian Point Energy Center provides 11 percent of the state's total electricity and more than 25 percent of that electricity is used in the New York City metropolitan area. The Business Council of Westchester strongly supports the facility's 20-year license renewal application, and opposes any direct or indirect



New York State (continued)

local, state, or federal efforts that would result in the facility's closure. Indian Point's continued operation must be included in any sustainable energy plan for the sake of New York's long-term energy, environmental, and economic interests. As the Business Council of Westchester report titled "An Assessment of Energy Needs in Westchester County" found, the closing of Indian Point Energy Center would have a catastrophic impact on the region resulting in higher electric rates for businesses and consumers, more power outages, a rapid rise in carbon emissions and a devastating blow to Westchester's economy.

A key to revitalizing New York's economy is making the State's energy costs more competitive.

2. Lower Energy Costs for all New Yorkers to Spur the Economy and Benefit Consumers

Up to 26 percent of the typical New Yorker's monthly electric bill is for taxes, fees, and surcharges, according to the Public Policy Institute of New York. Once energy taxes come into being, they rarely get repealed.

In 2009, at the height of the financial crisis and the need for drastic fiscal measures in Albany, the state adopted an explicit, "temporary" two percent tax on all electricity bills. In 2014, the first steps to end this "temporary" tax were enacted into law when the state began to phase out this 18-a assessment. The 18-a assessment is reduced to 1.63 percent in 2014; 1.00 for 2014, and 0.73% for 2016.

Repeal the assessment – known as the Section 18-a energy gross receipts assessment- on energy consumers. By repealing this assessment, business and residential consumers of electricity will save \$200 million. Policymakers should immediately halt all 18-a collections to eliminate the burdensome tax immediately before the current expiration date of 2017.



The Public Policy Institute has also called attention to four alternative energy fees the state imposes. These include New York's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard, Renewable Portfolio Standard, and Systems Benefit Charge (SBC). PPI estimates the total haul for these "off budget" items in 2009 was \$569 million. It is estimated that the downstate region was hit with \$505 million in fees and taxes related to 18-a, SBC, and Demand Side Management in 2013. Other programs collected an additional \$431 million during the same time period.

3. Reforming Energy Vision

The State of New York is contemplating Reforming the Energy Vision (REV), an initiative described as "an energy modernization initiative that will fundamentally transform the way electricity is distributed and used in New York State. This unprecedented effort will create the power grid of the future and forever change the way consumers buy and use energy."

REV seeks regulatory changes that will promote energy efficiency, renewable energy production, and wide deployment of "distributed" energy resources such as micro-grids, on-site power supplies and storage.

As the Public Service Commission studies and considers various aspects of REV, it should be guided by the following fundamental and transparent principles.



New York State (continued)

The impact to consumers of REV proposals should be thoroughly documented and communicated. REV should not lead to higher electricity costs and only those proposals that will clearly benefit consumers should be adopted.

4. Clean Energy Standard

In an effort to combat climate change, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo has directed the New York State Public Service Commission to design and enact a Clean Energy Standard. This initiative would mandate that 50 percent of all the electricity consumed in New York come from clean and renewable energy sources by the year 2030.

It is stated that the proposed Clean Energy Standard would recognize the important role that nuclear power plays to maintain a clean energy portfolio to achieve carbon emission reductions. Recognized as “an important bridge to a 50 percent renewable power requirement by 2030” due to the virtually emission-free electricity produced by nuclear power, the proposed Clean Energy Standard apparently is intended to only recognize the benefits of nuclear power stations located in upstate New York to the exclusion of the Hudson Valley and the New York City metropolitan area. As the New York State Public Service Commission develops a Clean Energy Standard, it must include the non-emitting power provided by all of the state’s nuclear powered electric-generating stations including Indian Point.

For years, nuclear power has been the state’s largest source of clean, reliable, affordable energy. Indian Point alone, prevents the release of 8.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually, which is equivalent to keeping 1.6 million cars off the road. New York’s energy policy must recognize the benefits provided by all of its nuclear power plants.

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NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE - ALGONQUIN PIPELINE SYSTEM - SPECTRA ENERGY

The demand for natural gas in New York State is growing and projections indicate that this trend will persist for the foreseeable future. Both the federal government and numerous state/local governments have encouraged the increased use of natural gas because the science is clear: natural gas is an environmentally preferable alternative to either coal or oil. This is due to the fact that the use of natural gas produces far fewer greenhouse gas emissions than either alternative. This pipeline system helps provide clean, affordable natural gas to homes and businesses in the Northeast.

The Algonquin natural gas pipeline system has been operating safely in New York, and more specifically in Westchester County, since the early 1950's. The Algonquin Incremental Market (AIM) project involves upgrading Algonquin's existing pipeline system within our region. The Algonquin expansion project will directly and indirectly create economic benefits for NYS and Westchester County, by increasing both state and local tax revenues as well as creating local jobs. Construction on the AIM project is under way and the pipeline will be ready to safely deliver new supplies of much needed domestic natural gas to the Northeast by November 2016.

The Business Council of Westchester supports the passage of S.4211 (Senator Griffo) that would provide incentives to facilitate the extension of natural gas distribution lines in New York. Clean burning natural gas is a cost effective energy source. Therefore access should be expanded wherever possible to the residents and businesses of New York.

*ABOVE The White Plains Library
Is proudly powered by clean and
safe natural gas. Photo provided
by OLA Consulting Engineers.*



New York State (continued)

HEALTH CARE

For the past three years, The Business Council of Westchester had continued to educate the business community on all the aspects of the New York State of Health Benefit Exchange, including what tax credits would be available for employers who wanted to offer health insurance for their employees. Information was also shared about the different mandates that businesses needed to be aware of under the Affordable Care Act. The Business Council of Westchester has also served as a navigator to help businesses and individuals enroll in the New York State of Health Exchange. As of February 1, 2016, The Business Council of Westchester's Navigator had enrolled 890 people into the program.

On other health care legislative issues The Business Council of Westchester supports:

- The adoption of strong transparency regulations for the Department of Financial Services that sets the rates for the plans under the New York State of Health Exchange.

For the past three years, BCW has continued to educate the business community on all the aspects of the New York State of Health Benefit Exchange.





- Placing a moratorium on new mandates due to changes imposed by the Affordable Care Act.
- Looking for more savings in the state's Medicaid Redesign efforts. Much of the work to redesign New York's Medicaid system calls for fundamental changes to the roles and compensation for many of the providers in the system. The redesign of the Medicaid system cannot just be across the board provider cuts and manipulated reimbursement rates to achieve real savings and not cost-shots to the private pay health insurance markets. In addition, The Business Council of Westchester supports the efforts to have the state take over the cost of the Medicaid financing from local municipalities.
- The enactment of Medical Liability Tort Reform to rein in the cost of medical malpractice insurance.
- Wellness programs offered by health insurers, featuring incentives and rewards for employers, employee contributions would be voluntary.



New York State (continued)

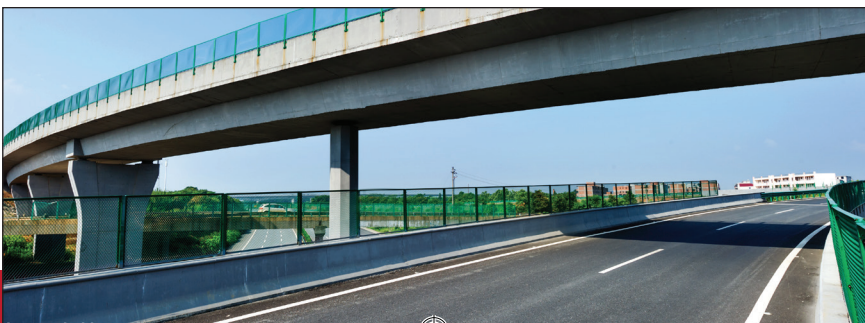
TRANSPORTATION

As an advocate for initiatives that will strengthen the state's economy, The Business Council of Westchester has taken a leadership role in dozens of important transportation issues. The creation of the new Tappan Zee Bridge was a top priority of The Business Council of Westchester for many years, and since the project to build the new bridge began two years ago, The Business Council has continued to involve its members in being part of the most significant infrastructure project in the nation.

In 2015, The Business Council of Westchester joined the state-wide organization "Rebuild New York" to urge the Governor and State Legislature to fund state and local roads, bridges and other transportation systems such as airports and rail that need major repairs. There is widespread agreement that New York needs to invest more in its infrastructure to remain competitive and create jobs. It is important that equitable funding for transit, roads and bridges be enacted, and The Business Council of Westchester strongly supports funding parity between the capital plans of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the New York State Department of Transportation in the 2016-17 State Budget.

It is imperative that as we look to recruit new businesses and encourage existing businesses to grow in Westchester County, that we are able to provide them with a solid functioning and safe infrastructure. Business needs to know that Westchester's roads, bridges and tunnels are safe and user friendly.

It is imperative that as we look to recruit new businesses and encourage existing businesses to grow in Westchester County we are able to provide them with a solid functioning and safe infrastructure.





EDUCATION

Preparing New York State's students to possess the skills to attend college and/or enter the work force is a top priority of The Business Council of Westchester. In 2015, The Business Council of Westchester testified in front of Governor Cuomo's Common Core Task Force in regard to the future of higher educational standards in New York State. Whether those standards are called Common Core, or standards that build on Common Core, with more of a New York accent, New York cannot waver from preparing all students for college and 21st century careers. The Business Council of Westchester urges any revised higher standards that are created to increase parent confidence, which includes shorter, age appropriate tests, computer adaptive testing, a review process of the standards and providing more feedback to teachers. Employers in Westchester need to know that our education system is giving students the tools they need to compete in an increasingly competitive global economy.

On other education issues; The Business Council of Westchester continues to support the passage of the Educational Tax Credit legislation which would provide a dollar-for-dollar credit against New York's personal income, corporate franchise, bank and insurance taxes for donations to education related entities. The purpose of the bill is to increase charitable donations from individuals and businesses to public schools, school districts and not-for-profit community based organizations that operate pre-kindergarten programs, provide visual arts, music, tutoring, college or career readiness or other instructions during or after school.

The Business Council of Westchester supports the expansion of the high quality CTE Programs, including expanding access to P-Tech schools and establishing regional high schools.



Federal

The Business Council of Westchester will continue to work with our Congressional delegation on numerous issues in 2016 including the following:

- Supporting common-sense tax reform to simplify the process and lower rates for businesses and individuals to help stimulate economic growth and create new private sector jobs.
- Reducing regulatory burdens to ease the bureaucracy with which business continue to struggle.
- Strengthen job training programs to better enable employers to recruit employees with the important skills that are needed.
- Support the reauthorization of Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which provides an increased focus on the academic achievement of career and technical education students and strengthens the connections between secondary and postsecondary education.
- Invest in federal R & D programs that help businesses develop new technologies, which then leads to creating new private sector jobs.

The Business Council of Westchester will continue to work with our Congressional delegation on numerous issues in 2016.

The Business Council of Westchester supports the “Made in Manufacturing Communities Act” which is being introduced during this year’s session by New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. The purpose of the bill is to authorize a public-private program to enhance the way states leverage federal economic development funds to create manufacturing hubs. The legislation does not propose a new funding stream but creates an awards system for communities to apply who have made serious investments in key areas like workforce training and retraining, advanced research and infrastructure and site development.



RIGHT Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino briefs BCW Board Members on his 2016 economic development priorities.



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