



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Darrel J. Aubertine

Senate Passes Net Metering Bill to Reduce Energy Costs

DARREL J. AUBERTINE February 22, 2010

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Aubertine bill makes clean energy investments profitable for farms/businesses, creates jobs

ALBANY (February 22, 2010)—The New York State Senate today passed legislation sponsored by Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine (S.6700) to amend the state’s net metering law to clear hurdles and allow farms, small businesses, municipalities and other non-residential customers to reduce their energy costs by generating clean electricity and selling it back to the grid.

“This is a business friendly and environmentally friendly bill that will help lower the cost for businesses and create jobs,” said Sen. Aubertine, Ranking Majority Member of the Senate’s Energy & Telecommunications Committee. “This legislation balances the needs of farmers, business owners, and the power industry, with the need to be better stewards of our environment. If a business wants to put photovoltaic panels on their roof or a farm is prepared to turn their waste into energy, net metering empowers these businesses to see that investment pay off with significantly reduced energy bills.”

Net metering legislation passed in 2008 gave commercial customers, including farms and small businesses, the ability to use power generated by clean energy sources, such as farm waste systems, the ability to sell back power unused power supplied to the electrical grid to offset the cost of power obtained from the grid. However, the law unintentionally limited the ability of New York businesses to generate and use their own clean energy. This bill clears those restrictions so that New York State’s net metering laws can now help reduce rising energy costs and limit overall stress on the electric grid through environmentally friendly means.

Additionally, this legislation provides incentive for businesses by lowering fees and reducing energy costs. For farmers, it sets in statute the maximum cost for connecting to the grid, a cost that has stifled farms in the region and throughout the state. Many farms have made the investment to generate energy and reduce costs, but could not afford to connect to the grid and obtain these benefits. In some cases, farm owners were told they would have to pay tens of thousands of dollars and even hundreds of thousands of dollars to connect. This bill limits that expense to \$5,000 for farms generating up to 500 kilowatts.

“This bill broadens the ability of our farms and all types of businesses throughout Upstate New York and in our rural communities to take advantage of net metering,” said Sen. Aubertine, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, the Senate Upstate Caucus and the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. “The Senate took a critical step today in clearing the way for lower energy costs, job creation and new sources of clean renewable power.”

"Today's passage of the net metering amendment is a major win for New York's environment and clean energy economy," said Carol E. Murphy, Executive Director of the Alliance for Clean Energy New York (ACE NY). "There is a strong demand among commercial customers for renewable energy systems, and local installers across the state have millions of dollars worth of pending contracts that can now move forward. We commend Senator Aubertine for supporting net metering and recognizing the important role renewable energy plays in creating green jobs and protecting our environment."

Dean Norton, President of New York Farm Bureau, said "New York's farm families have been leading the way in utilizing renewable energy, from capturing methane on the farm and converting it to electricity to installing solar panels to help power farms naturally. Net metering is the tool that makes this innovation possible, and New York Farm Bureau is pleased to support this important initiative."

Supporters of this legislation include ACE NY; the Farm Bureau; Alteris Renewables Inc; American Lung Association; Citizens Campaign; Environmental Advocates of New York; Environmental Advocates Of New York; Hudson Valley Clean Energy; New York Public Interest Research Group; New York State Conference of mayors and Municipal Officials; NY League Of Conservation Voters; Solar One; Uni-Solar; Vote Solar Initiative; and the Western New York Climate Action Coalition.