



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Cheers Announcement of PSC Approval to Repower NRG Dunkirk

CATHARINE YOUNG June 12, 2014

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Public Service Commission Approves Repowering Proposal

ALBANY – Citing the “quadfecta of benefits,” PSC Chair Audrey Zibelman led the unanimous Public Service Commissioners’ vote of approval today to repower the coal-fired Dunkirk NRG plant into a clean, environmentally-friendly 435 megawatt natural gas facility.

The project’s green light by the regulatory agency caps a several year long struggle to gain support to save the generator from closing.

Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean) led the charge as Chair of PowerUpWNY, a coalition of labor, business, governmental and community leaders who banded together to fight for the project. She passed several bills in the state Senate to advance repowering, and in the 2012-13 state budget, she successfully inserted language that would require the PSC to consider the economic, jobs, environmental and tax base impact of repowering, in addition to the effects on ratepayers and the reliability of electricity supply.

“This outcome is fantastic, one that many said would never happen. It shows that if a goal is worth achieving, it is worth fighting for. When Governor Cuomo came to Dunkirk to announce his support last December people were crying with joy. It was our Christmas miracle. Now that miracle has officially come to pass,” Senator Young said.

During the PSC vote, Chair Zibelman said that the project “brings a quadfecta and more” of benefits. “It’s a win for consumers and the community.”

Senator Young wrote to the then PSC Chair Garry Brown last year, asking that the PSC hold a hearing in the community instead of the usual Albany site, so that people could have their voices heard. In response, the hearing was held at SUNY Fredonia on July 15. Estimates are that up to 2,500 people braved brutally hot temperatures to enthusiastically show their support.

The Senator said that she felt that the huge outpouring of support at the forum was a turning point in convincing Albany that the repowering should happen.

That viewpoint was confirmed today, when Commissioner Gregg Sayre, who attended the hearing spoke in favor of repowering during the PSC vote.

He said that when he got off the Thruway and saw a flashing sign pointing to the PSC hearing, he knew it would be an “interesting” meeting.

Commissioner Sayre said he was moved and impressed by the community support, and he was extremely happy to see the conclusions of the studies and vote in favor of the project.

Another rally was held on the Dunkirk Pier last December, about a week before the Governor’s visit to announce his support.

“The community has always understood that repowering will save and create hundreds of jobs, lower energy costs, ensure a reliable electricity source to power our homes and businesses, and reduce harmful emissions, all while stabilizing our tax base for years to come,” said Senator Young.

“To everyone who sent an email or letter, made a telephone call, attended a rally, put up a sign, or told a friend or neighbor about the importance of repowering, I cannot thank you enough. It was your dedicated support that made this happen and has given us bright hopes for the future,” said Senator Young.

Since the announcement in December that the repowering review process would proceed, NRG and National Grid have worked together in a spirit of cooperation to come up with a plan to provide a positive result for the future.

The project is slated to be completed in September of 2015.

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