



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

RALLY SUPPORTING DUNKIRK REPOWERING GARNERS STRONG COMMUNITY SUPPORT

CATHARINE YOUNG October 17, 2015



DUNKIRK – Surrounded by a strong showing of support from community members, local laborers, entrepreneurs and more, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean) today led the community in a rally supporting the repowering project at NRG's Dunkirk plant.

The community united to show that the region continues to stand firmly in support of repowering the NRG plant's operation.

“The community has shown an overwhelmingly positive response to the project. Residents near and far know how important the plant is, so it is great to have so many supporters turn out to show their continued enthusiasm for the project. With everyone’s help, we can make sure we send a loud and clear message that we resoundingly support repowering the NRG plant because it is so vital to our economy,” said Senator Young.

The Senator was joined at the event by a host of area officials and community members, including Assemblyman Andy Goodell; Chautauqua County Executive Vince Horrigan; A.J. Dolce, Mayor of the City of Dunkirk; Willie Rosas, Councilman-at-Large and Mayor-elect of the City of Dunkirk; Doug Stock, President of the Dunkirk Central Labor Council; Dave Wilkinson, President of the Jamestown Central Labor Council and IBEW Local 106; Ted Skerpon, President and Business manager for Local 97; Todd Trantum, President of the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier; Nancy Baker, President of the Dunkirk Teachers’ Association; SUNY Fredonia President Dr. Virginia Horvath and others.

“Repowering NRG is vital to the future of the community here in Dunkirk and all of Chautauqua County. If our region is going to compete for industry and jobs we need to generate our own power. Without the plant, New York State could be forced to rely on dirty power imported from other states. Ratepayers would be doubly hurt by the loss of jobs and the higher cost associated with imported power,” said Senator Young.

The repowered NRG plant in Dunkirk could generate up to 435 MW, enough power to support 348,000 average households. The repowering project, which was approved by the Public Service Commission (PSC), would make the plant a natural gas processing facility, reducing plant emissions by up to 90 percent on an annual basis.

In recent years, Senator Young has passed several bills in the state Senate to advance repowering, and in the 2012-13 state budget, she successfully inserted language that requires 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 culminated in a unanimous vote of approval from the PSC to repower the coal-fired Dunkirk NRG plant into a clean, environmentally-friendly natural gas facility. The project's green light by the regulatory agency highlighted a several years long struggle to gain support to save the generator from closing.

Senator Young said that she felt that past outpourings of support had been a turning point in convincing Albany that the repowering should happen. That viewpoint was confirmed when Commissioner Gregg Sayre, who attended the PSC hearing in Fredonia, spoke in favor of repowering during the PSC vote.

However, progress on the repowering has been slowed because of a lawsuit from a rival corporation. Currently, the state's Independent System Operator (ISO) has been directed by

the PSC to conduct two studies to evaluate reliability and congestion concerns in Western New York.

Senator Young said, "Repowering NRG will ensure reliability and solve congestion issues on the electric grid. We thank Governor Cuomo for his outstanding support of the project, because it is vital to the whole region.

"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. Another strong showing from everyone gathered will help move this project across the finish line."

The loss of the plant would also be crippling for the City of Dunkirk and Chautauqua County. NRG is the largest taxpayer in Chautauqua County, and its loss would not only cost jobs at the plant, but also drive up the cost of living for area residents, homeowners and businesses.

School property taxes could rise by as much as 42 percent or force the layoffs of nearly 60 teachers and staff. The City of Dunkirk also would have to raise property taxes by about 56 percent to make up the difference. This would cost the average homeowner living in the city with a house assessed at \$50,000 an additional \$500 per year. Chautauqua County property

taxes would have to escalate by about \$1.5 million per year to make up for the loss of revenue from NRG.

“The loss of NRG would be devastating to taxpayers across the region. If the school district lost out on this revenue and these education professionals were laid off, area children would not be able to receive the high-quality, first class learning opportunities they need to excel. The tax increase in the city and the county would drive people from their homes, multiplying the long-term impact and restricting the services that would be available for those who remain,” said Senator Young.