Welcome to the Newsletter of the L. I. Clean Energy Leadership Task Force.

As we celebrate Earth Day 2015, it is appropriate to take stock and evaluate the success of efforts to mitigate global warming and promote clean energy solutions. This year we brought people together for a frank discussion of the status of efforts to grow the industry, and to brainstorm policy ideas that could be the kind of game changers that will further boost the growth of clean energy on Long Island.

Over the last decade or so, what has been accomplished with the growth of the clean energy business sector on Long Island is truly dramatic. The solar industry in particular has experienced profound market transformation. Even as government and utility provided incentives are cut, the price of installed solar continues to drop, and solar installations continue at an accelerating rate of growth. In fact, the growth in the solar industry is almost exponential. At the end of 2014, solar on Long Island passed the 10,000 roof milestone (which took about 12 years), and it is expected that in as little as a half year later, the 15,000th solar roof will be installed. This success is tempered by challenges ahead. Utility incentives are expected to end completely in the next year or so, and the 30% federal tax credit is set to end in 2016. While the solar industry’s fast growth is a cause for some celebration, when viewed from the perspective of the larger picture, it is clear that there is much more to be done. Currently less than 5% of the electricity consumed on Long Island is generated by clean renewable sources and only about 2% of L. I. homeowners have rooftop solar. From a business perspective, there is a potentially tremendous untapped market.

Beyond solar, most of the growth in the other clean energy industries has not been as robust, but again, the potential is huge. We organized a panel of clean energy professionals, who all expressed that their businesses are poised to grow substantially if the conditions were right. These business leaders are not looking for handouts or guarantees. Instead, they want consistency in programs and clear strategies to transform markets in a manner that is sustainable in the long term.
The Task Force, which has been meeting for 10 years, brought together a panel to discuss the status of the clean energy business sector on Long Island. The Panel included representatives of the following clean energy businesses and trade associations: solar (rooftop & ground mounted), geothermal heat exchange, home energy efficiency retrofit contractors, home energy performance testing, and green buildings, along with clean energy advocates. The Panel indicated that many clean energy businesses on Long Island are seeing growth, but not near the full potential. There is a tremendous transformation and increase in consumer choices but it is a very challenging time to stay in business. “We recently passed 10,000 solar roofs, but while we are making great strides, we need to be making much greater leaps,” asserted Gordian Raacke, Executive Director of Renewable Energy Long Island. Of all the clean energy businesses, solar is growing particularly fast—almost exponential growth, but still there is a long way to go to see significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and to achieve the technology’s true potential. The Panel then identified and discussed policy and program ideas that have the potential to greatly expand and grow the clean energy business sector and green job development on Long Island.

Policy ideas from panel discussion:

**Solar**
- NY State should maintain on-bill financing, which has been successful.
- Localities should adopt a “Merton rule” requiring new large commercial construction to install renewables sufficient to meet a percentage (10%? 30%?) of the projected electric energy use.
- Localities should adopt “solar ready” requirements for new construction.
- An inventory of solar suitable roofs on Long Island should be conducted, so we have a better idea of the capacity of rooftop solar.

**Geothermal**
- Local governments should adopt the model geothermal code drafted by the Suffolk Planning Commission.
- NY State should adopt a sales tax exemption for geothermal.
- NY State should adopt a $5000 tax credit for geothermal.

**Energy Efficiency**
- NY State should maintain on-bill financing which has been successful.
- EE meter technology including software should be adopted, to provide a way to measure and value benefits from energy efficiency. The market for retrofits could grow faster if the value of the improvements can be quantified.
- The federal government should adopt a tax credit for residential energy efficiency retrofits.
- Require energy performance certificates for the sale of a home. (It was pointed out that this has to be based on a fixed asset rating – a HERS model rather than a BPI audit model, because usage will change with new owner.)

**Green Buildings**
- NY State should amend the Energy Conservation Construction Code to require performance testing by third parties.
- Localities should adopt fast-track permitting as incentive for green building.
- Localities should adopt “solar ready” requirements for new construction.
- NY State should require mechanical ventilation with heat exchangers on all new construction.
- Current codes require outdoor air, not fresh air. Filtration might be better in certain cases.

**Other Policies**
- In general, programs should be more stable with fewer sudden changes.
- Rate policy – provide price signals in the marketplace with time-of-day pricing.
- Unify, streamline and digitize the permitting process at town and village governments, instead of paying to expand existing permitting system, spend on new systems and technology to gain efficiency.
- Price energy according to its true cost, including health and environmental impacts. (Carbon tax?)
Updates & Announcements:

Elissa Ward-Kyle of Vision Long Island gave the Smart Growth updates:

Complete Streets Summit
The Second Annual Complete Streets Summit was held earlier this year to inform, coordinate and advocate with the growing number of Long Islanders seeking to improve roadway safety for all in downtowns, residential streets and commercial corridors.

Smart Growth Saturday – May 9th
Tour local downtowns with projects underway and well managed Main Streets, showing the progress of downtown renewal across Long Island. Tours will gather at 11 am for an initial presentation and will leave before 11:30. Tours are free, but RSVPs are required as space is limited. Call Vision Long Island at 631-261-0242 for more information or to RSVP.

Smart Growth Awards – Friday, June 12 from 11:00-2:00 at the Crest Hollow Country Club. Visit www.visionlongisland.org for more information.

Beth Fiteni of Community Development Corporation of Long Island gave the NYSERDA updates:

The next Cleaner Greener Communities round of funding just opened on May 1st and applications are due July 31st. See: http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/content/long-island

NY Prize Proposals due May 15th.
Competitive grant for microgrid projects. The first stage awards will provide funding for up to 25 feasibility studies across the state. Visit http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/NY-Prize

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