

## Gov. Cuomo's New Energy Efficiency Target for New York

Posted by Valerie Strauss on Sunday, April 22, 2018

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Just on time for Earth Day 2018, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced new energy efficiency goals for New York State to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help New Yorkers save on energy costs, and create jobs. According to the Governor's office, the new energy efficiency target is expected to deliver nearly one third of the greenhouse gas emissions reductions needed to meet New York's climate goal of 40 percent reduction by 2030. The Governor also said there would be an additional \$36.5 Million in money for worker training to prepare up to 19,500 New Yorkers for new jobs.

In his announcement, the Governor reinforced the value of energy efficiency as "the most cost-effective way for New Yorkers to lower utility bills, curb harmful emissions and battle climate change."

Strategies to meet this target should enable building developers, owners of commercial and institutional buildings, and homeowners to make building improvements to reduce building energy use. These strategies in themselves are not new. We'll be looking closely to see what types of changes are proposed to meet the new targets.

New Yorkers pay about \$35 billion each year for electricity and heating fuel, and buildings are by far the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (approximately 59% statewide). Cuomo predicted a reduction of 185 trillion BTUs below the currently forecasted energy use in 2025. His office projected that achieving this reduction would "accelerate achievement of energy efficiency in the next 7 years by more than 40 percent over the current path."

The new initiative is intended to support and extend the work in progress under Reforming the Energy Vision, helping cost-effective private sector energy efficiency businesses to grow and promoting partnerships between third-parties and utilities. These strategies are expected to increase energy efficiency upgrades, and utilization of efficient appliances, and advance innovative technologies, such as heat pumps. The Governor is also calling for utilities to accelerate innovation and expand their energy efficiency activities to cut emissions by cost-effectively reducing energy usage for all fuel types across the state.

AEA's David Hepinstall said, "We are pleased Governor Cuomo has embraced energy efficiency as a key component of his clean energy and climate vision. Establishing energy efficiency targets for the utilities is a necessary first step in valuing efficiency as an energy resource. We look forward to working with utilities and the State of New York to meet the targets through the inclusion of multifamily buildings where a large portion of low income New Yorkers reside, and where efficiency can help create safe and affordable housing."

Over 110,000 New Yorkers are working in energy efficiency-related jobs. According to the Governor's press release, "NYSERDA will commit an additional \$36.5 million to train over 19,500 New Yorkers for clean energy jobs to support this rapidly growing industry." Linking training to new jobs or job advancement opportunities will be key to the success of this initiative.

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As a leading trainer of energy efficiency professionals, contractors, and building management and operations personnel – as well as affordable housing providers and developers, AEA has contributed substantially to the growth and professional development of the energy efficiency industry in New York and elsewhere. AEA graduates populate many of the leading private energy consulting firms. Its technical training for participants of its Workforce Development partners helped many individuals get their start in green jobs. “AEA is ready to deliver the training and mentoring to assist today’s energy efficiency workforce to strengthen its knowledge and skills to meet the expanded goals the Governor is announcing,” said Hepinstall. “We are eager to see how NYSERDA plans to implement this pledge to increase energy efficiency jobs, and to contribute to this effort.”

AEA provides extensive energy education and technical services for all types of housing, and has a deep specialization in multifamily buildings. AEA services include energy audits and reporting, retro-commissioning, Integrated Physical Needs Assessments, and assistance to housing providers in meeting Enterprise Green Communities criteria on top of a robust practice consulting construction management, contractor technical support for both new and existing high performance and Passive House projects. AEA implements a variety of government and utility-funded energy efficiency programs, including Weatherization. (AEA began as, and remains today, a network supporting a membership of fourteen nonprofits that offer energy retrofits to low income households under the Weatherization Assistance Program.) Over the past 10 years, AEA has not only trained but hired over 75 of its workforce trainees.

The Governor’s announcement provided an upbeat lead-in to Earth Day. The proof, however, will be in the implementation of the goals he has announced. Energy efficiency advocates must be attentive and persistent. We count on Governor Cuomo to live up to his promise to deliver on this new pledge with new policies and resources, while keeping the State’s existing commitments as well.

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