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Andrew M. Cuomo - Governor

Governor Cuomo Announces 85 Entities Respond to Energy Highway Task Force RFI

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(June 29, 2012)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that 85 private developers, investor-owned utilities, financial firms and other entities have responded to the New York Energy Highway Task Force's Request for Information (RFI) with 130 ideas to upgrade and revitalize the state's aging infrastructure, totaling more than 25,000 megawatts.

The Task Force issued the RFI on April 11, asking for proposals in support of an energy highway that would simultaneously promote clean energy supplies, job creation and economic growth. The RFI responses are now available at www.nyenergyhighway.com.

"The overwhelming response shows there is a strong interest in the energy industry to make sizable and needed investment into our energy infrastructure," said Governor Cuomo. "The next step is to review these ideas and develop an action plan to modernize our energy highway with a focus on improving safety and reliability, making the grid more efficient, improving the environment and lowering costs for consumers. Together with the NY Works projects, the Energy Highway will be essential to rebuilding our infrastructure using clean and efficient energy, while at the same time putting New Yorkers back to work and showing businesses that New York is the place to grow and prosper."

"We are extremely impressed with the in-depth knowledge, innovative plans and sheer variety of issues in the responses. While the quantity and quality of responses was expected, we are thrilled to discover the incredible level of detail, underscoring how many stakeholders share our commitment to comprehensively and promptly plan the future for New York's energy system," the Task Force said as a joint statement. "The Action Plan will reflect the incredible wealth of information from the RFI responses, and the suggestions from public comments and other stakeholder information."

The information submitted in the RFI responses covers a wide range of issues, from encouraging the development of more renewable sources of energy to suggesting ways the state can foster energy projects to proposing new generation and transmission options. All RFI responses are considered conceptual and none have been endorsed by the Task Force.

The breakdown of responses by category is: 51 for generation, 29 for transmission, four gas pipelines and 46 submissions covering various ideas related to the energy industry. The responses include proposals for more than 25,000 megawatts of capacity from new and existing transmission and generation. (One megawatt is enough electricity to meet the needs of 800 to 1,000 typical homes.)

The Governor's Task Force invites public comments on the RFI responses. The Task Force will review the responses as it develops an Energy Highway Action Plan, which is expected to be released in the fall. The Action Plan, with the Task Force's recommendations, will be available to the public on the Energy Highway website when it is announced.

The website has a summary chart of all RFI responses with links to each response document, and two graphic maps showing the general location of proposed projects, when that information was provided in the RFI response. The maps also have an interactive feature to give viewers on-the-spot details about a proposed project. To gather input from the public, a link to a comment email form is available on the website. All comments must be received by July 31.

In his 2012 State of the State Address, Governor Cuomo outlined his vision for the Energy Highway. It included projects that would enable delivery of economical surplus power from upstate sources and a variety of renewable power sources to the downstate region, where the need is greatest, and initiatives involving the repowering of inefficient power plants in urban and other areas.

The RFI sought detailed information on various aspects of potential electric generation and transmission projects, including such areas as financing, construction, operation, and economic and environmental benefits, and encouraged use of existing rights-of-way for transmission proposals. Respondents were also invited to identify potential challenges to project development that could be addressed with state assistance.

The Governor appointed the Task Force to implement the Energy Highway initiative, and named as Co-Chairs Gil C. Quiniones, President and Chief Executive Officer of the New York Power Authority, and Joseph Martens, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Joining them as Task Force members are Kenneth Adams, President, Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner of Empire State Development; Garry A. Brown, Chairman of the New York State Public Service Commission; and Francis J. Murray, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

Responses to the RFI document, which is still available on the Energy Highway Website for reference purposes, were due on May 30th. A conference for potential respondents and other interested parties was held on April 19 in Tarrytown to brief those considering submitting proposals and to answer preliminary questions. Written questions were also accepted and answered on the website through May 11.

In early April, the Governor convened a summit at Columbia University that brought together federal, state and industry officials to discuss and explore ways to meet New York State's future electric power needs while protecting the environment and creating jobs.

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