



Cindy Oehmigen

Director of Energy & Corporate Services

Committing to Clean Energy

There is no doubt that with the new Administration many are concerned about the shift in policies for Environmental Protection and the dismantling of the Clean Power Plan. Regardless of which side of the argument one chooses to support, there is a lot for all of us to watch. Some have been getting a head start on doing what needs to be done, “with or without Washington.”

On March 28th, the announcement out of Albany was that Governor Cuomo and California’s Governor Brown are reaffirming their commitment to Clean Power. New York State and California represent nearly one-fifth of Americans and 20% of the national GDP, positioning them to have a powerful influence. Per New York State’s Press Office, efforts include several programs.

1. Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions (targets 80% below 1990 levels by 2050)
2. Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) aimed at reducing carbon emission cap by at least another 30% between 2020 and 2030)
3. Reforming the Energy Vision (Programs to encourage energy innovation, attract new jobs, and improve the consumer choice.)
4. Clean Energy Standard (Energy mandate for 50% electricity sourced through renewables like wind and solar by 2030)
5. Clean Tech Fund (Utilizing the Green Bank to eliminate market barriers making clean energy scalable)

According to World Wildlife Magazine (Spring 2017 issue), there is also a move afoot by an influential alliance of companies across the nation, both buyers and sellers, who are working “to add 60 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity to the grid by 2025.” The magazine also stated

that, “As of January 2017, 65 companies had signed on to the principles of Renewable Energy Buyers Alliance, REBA.” These are not small struggling companies. Recognizable companies such as 3M, Amazon, DuPont, Johnson & Johnson, and Walmart, and even some located in your back yard (Lockheed Martin and Novelis), are committed to the principles of Renewable Energy Buyers Alliance (REBA). The members of REBA tell utilities what they are looking for when buying renewable energy from the grid to meet their purchasing goals:

- Greater choice in options
- More access to cost competitive options
- Longer/variable-term contracts
- Access to new projects that will reduce emissions
- Increased access to third party financing and simpler processes/contract for renewable energy
- Opportunities to work with utilities and regulators to expand choices for renewables

Before you conclude this is only for the “big guys,” I know of a plastics molding company right around the corner in Rochester—HARBEC—who, at my last visit, was installing their second full scale wind generator, had a fully functioning bank of micro-generators, and was in the planning stages to offer energy resources for their business park neighbors. HARBEC is constantly considering the impact new initiatives will have on the environment. They had established goals to be carbon neutral by 2013, which they accomplished. They established a goal to be water neutral by 2015, also accomplished. If you get the chance to ask Bob Bechtold, President of HARBEC, why he is so committed to achieving these goals I bet he will tell you, not only do we take the welfare of our global community seriously, it provides a strong eco-economic value to our customers. In other words, it’s just good business.

I had the opportunity to attend a conference a few years ago. The key note, Andrew Winston, had co-authored the book, “Green to Gold.” It spoke to this very topic. I will end with a quote that Andy offered, “If you are not at the table, you are on the menu.” Pull up a chair.

For more information:

<https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Newsroom/2017-Announcements/2017-03-28-Governor-Cuomo-and-Brown-Reaffirm-Commitment-to-Exceeding-Targets-of-Clean-Power-Plan>

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/magazine/issues/spring-2017/articles/exponential-power>

<http://www.harbec.com/sustainability-3/sustainable-manufacturing/>