



RESOLUTION NO. 3 – JOBS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

For Long Island, the economy will always be closely entwined with the environment. Guaranteeing the availability of clean drinking water and maintaining the viability of our coastlines must always remain leading social priorities. The Degradation of the our sole source aquifers, the intrusion of nitrogen into pollution of our coastal waters, rising sea levels caused by climate change, and the impact of disasters like Superstorm Sandy are issues the Long Island Federation of Labor and environmental advocates must address together.

Working families are the first to fall victim when there is a failure of leadership to address these environmental challenges. Our homes and jobs are impacted just like everyone else, and it is our members who are called upon as first responders when disaster strikes. Furthermore, we have the opportunity to create thousands of new jobs enhancing our coastal resiliency, remediating water issues, and combatting the devastating effects of climate change.

The Suffolk County Coastal Resiliency Initiative – a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to use federal and state grant funding to connect thousands of parcels to sewers passed through referenda in January, 2019 – will create over one hundred jobs in the areas covered by the resiliency and recovery grant from Hurricane Sandy. It generates opportunities for existing businesses to grow and provides the infrastructure necessary for the redevelopment of existing parcels. Connections to sewers will reduce the amount of nitrogen seeping into the groundwater from cesspools and septic systems, as well as reduce the amount of nitrogen rich storm water runoff destroying our coastal bays. However, there is much more work to be done.

360,000 residences– representing 75 percent of homes in Suffolk County– are not connected to sewers and rely on septic tanks or cesspools, leaving effluent largely untreated, which then flows into our groundwater and Long Island’s bays, rivers and the Sound. Direct Federal investment for the construction of sewage treatment plants and sewer infrastructure dried up in 1987 leaving Long Island largely without sewers and in need of new revenues for water treatment.

By virtue of Long Island’s geography and our experience with Superstorm Sandy we know that the need for action to address climate change is urgent. Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature have made an historic commitment to transition New York’s electricity generation to come

from 100% renewable sources by 2040 and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Cuomo Administration has also established an offshore wind procurement target of 9,000 megawatts of power by 2035.

Long Island is strategically placed to be at the epicenter of this developing industry. This Federation has worked with allies to gain public support for offshore wind, supported an initial power purchase agreement with Deepwater Wind (now Orsted), secured a mandate for Project Labor Agreements through the Public Service Commission in the development of off-shore wind projects, and worked with educators and the industry to establish training programs. It is estimated that 5,000 jobs will be created in this region over a ten-year period.

Such a rapid transformation of electrical power will certainly cause disruptions to the workforce engaged in fossil fuel generation and to the communities where these power generating facilities are located. It is imperative that plans are established now for job training, health and retirement assistance and support for local communities, the set of priorities often referred to as “just transition.”

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Long Island Federation of Labor work closely with our affiliates, allies in the environmental community and elected officials to address the following urgent priorities:

- Establish a permanent funding stream to build sewers and provide grants for advanced septic systems for large areas of Suffolk County which are underserved;
- Assess the need for rapid development of infrastructure and job training to meet the demands of the offshore wind industry and ensure that our affiliates are able to benefit from the new jobs created;
- Investigate ways to gain additional high value jobs in solar and energy efficiency under the New York State Clean Energy Standard;
- Address the just transition of the workforce and communities which are supported by existing fossil fuel industries.

Submitted by: Resolutions Committee

June 26, 2019

Action Taken _____