



WNY Region Receives \$998,000 for Regional Sustainability Planning; from New York State Energy Research and Development Authority

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A coalition of five counties in Western New York, towns and organizations has received an award for more than \$998,000 from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to create a comprehensive smart growth plan for regional sustainability. This plan is part of the Cleaner, Greener Communities program, a major environmental initiative unveiled by governor Andrew Cuomo last year.

The coalition, comprised of representatives from Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Niagara counties, will develop a smart growth plan that encompasses the Western Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) area. Allegany County will lead the planning process for the Western New York region.

The development of a comprehensive regional sustainability plan is the first phase of the Cleaner, Greener Communities program and is intended to provide resources that each New York State region can use to develop its own vision, goals and objectives for a sustainable future, identify actions needed to achieve that future and outline metrics to measure success. Only one award was made in each region of the state.

"The protection and improvement of our environment is not only key to quality of life in Western New York, it can also serve as a driving force for economic development," said Howard Zemsky, Western New York Regional Economic Development Council co-chair and managing partner at Larkin Development Group. "I applaud governor Cuomo and the Cleaner, Green Communities program."

"Leveraging our region's natural beauty and abundant natural resources is a major thrust of our Western New York REDC plan and this award from NYSERDA will help our region realize this critical goal," said Satish Tripathi, Western New York Regional Economic Development Council co-chair and president of the University at Buffalo. "Urban revitalization and environmentally sustainable growth strategies go 'hand-in-hand' and developing a regional approach will be a great benefit-economically and socially-to our WNY region. I look forward to working with our community to develop and implement our regional sustainable growth strategy."

"This funding is an excellent opportunity for the Western New York Region to develop a plan that improves environmental quality by reducing air, water and land pollution and improves quality of life through smart growth and sustainable development," said Francis Murray Jr., president and CEO of NYSERDA. "Under governor Cuomo's leadership, all New Yorkers will benefit, as the regional plans will examine each region's available resources and provide a specific vision to reduce carbon emissions and increase energy efficiency and renewable energy."

Fred Sinclair, the chairman of Allegany County's Planning and Economic Development Committee said, "Allegany County, as Sponsor of the Cleaner, Greener Communities Initiative in the Western

New York Region, is well positioned and poised to join in the development of the sustainability strategy. The vision is that the identification and subsequent implementation of specific projects will integrate environmental improvement, energy sustainability and economic development into an industry. The well-established curriculums of SUNY Alfred which teach green technologies and are pioneering sustainable agriculture as well as the research capabilities of Alfred University developments in the energy sector, compliment a strong industrial base and multiple municipal electric authorities, all serving to fuel our keen interest in this initiative."

"We are thrilled to participate in the Cleaner, Greener Sustainable Planning effort so we can identify ways that Erie County can reduce our carbon emissions and energy usage while also strengthening our local economy," said Maria Whyte, commissioner, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning.

Once the plan is developed, additional funding will be available from the Cleaner, Greener Communities program on a competitive basis to implement projects that support the goals of the plans. Projects must create opportunities for achieving carbon reductions, energy efficiency savings and/or renewable energy deployment while enhancing job creation, economic investment and development consistent with the region's sustainability and REDC strategic plan.

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