



NYSERDA and Gov. Cuomo celebrate launch of Buildings of Excellence competition

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Albany, NY Governor Andrew Cuomo has launched the \$30 million “Buildings of Excellence” Competition to advance the design, construction and operation of low- or zero-carbon emitting buildings that also provide comfortable, healthy and affordable living and working spaces. New Yorkers pay about \$35 billion annually for electricity and heating fuels, and buildings account for 59 percent of statewide greenhouse gas emissions. The competition is part of Cuomo’s goal to transform New York’s entire building stock as part of his nation-leading Green New Deal, a clean energy and jobs agenda that puts the state on a path to a carbon-free economy. It also supports the state’s goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030.

“The time for addressing climate change is now and today we are doubling down on our commitment to lead the way with a revolutionary path toward carbon-free buildings,” Cuomo said. “The development of low- to zero-carbon buildings will create healthier living spaces and communities for all New Yorkers, while driving down harmful emissions from one of our highest contributing sectors—our building stock—and pushing us forward on our path to carbon neutrality.”

Administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the Buildings of Excellence competition will offer financial incentives and recognition for building construction and operation projects that demonstrate cost-effective and replicable low-carbon or carbon neutral designs that reduce energy costs for residents and offer developers a competitive edge with predictable revenue and cost projections. The competition will show how low-carbon buildings can be profitable, attractive and affordable for New Yorkers and will demonstrate how advanced building design can eventually be adopted into the NYS Energy Conservation and Construction Code.

The competition also supports the proposed increase in New York’s Clean Energy Standard mandate to generate 70% of the state’s electricity through renewable energy sources by 2030. By transitioning to a low-carbon building stock, New York will lower energy and fuel usage and overall consumer energy demand by reducing the need for fossil fuels while shifting to a renewable energy system for heating and electricity. As another example of innovative energy initiatives, the Buildings of Excellence competition also builds on New York’s national leadership on clean energy and climate change.

Alicia Barton, president and CEO, NYSERDA said, “New York’s transition to a carbon-free economy under governor Cuomo’s Green New Deal means taking bold steps today that will provide great

rewards tomorrow for all New Yorkers. Launching the Buildings of Excellence competition is setting a new bar for buildings throughout the state, and providing the support needed to recognize and advance solutions that will help building owners achieve a low- or net-zero status that delivers environmental and health benefits, reduces energy costs, and provides safe, comfortable spaces for all residents and users.”

The competition will include three rounds. Each round will provide up to \$10 million, with up to \$1 million available per project. The first round is focused on multifamily buildings. Applications are being accepted through June 4, 2019 with awards expected in the summer of 2019. To be eligible, projects must be located in one of the six electric investor-owned New York State utility company territories. Proposals can be for new construction or rehabilitation projects. Mixed use buildings are eligible, but at least 50 percent of the building by square footage must be for housing. Projects must demonstrate design and construction methods that can be easily replicated and adopted by professionals for future projects.

Eligible projects that will be awarded must be in one of the following four phases:

Early Design - Projects in the schematic design or design development phase; eligible for an award of up to \$1,000,000.

Late Design - Design development is complete, and the construction documents are being developed, but the building permit has not yet been issued; eligible for an award of up to \$750,000.

Under Construction - If the building permit has been issued, but the first Certificate of Occupancy, whether temporary or permanent, has not been issued; eligible for an award of up to \$500,000.

Post-Completion Performance Optimization - Projects must show how additional proposed enhancements and/or optimizations demonstrate replicability and improve the living environment; eligible for an award of up to \$250,000.

100 million s/f of new construction is built per year in the state. Once a building is constructed, it is in operation for about 50-100 years, and it becomes much more expensive to execute significant energy and carbon reducing measures after a building is completed. Therefore, the focus is to incorporate low- and carbon neutral measures and design features as early as possible in the buildings' initial design stages.

The Buildings of Excellence competition is part of New York's approach to build a strong foundation for energy efficiency activities economy-wide. By fostering innovation to deliver low- and zero-carbon energy efficiency solutions, New York will cut emissions by cost-effectively reducing electricity and building fuel demand across the state. Energy efficiency is a significant part of New York State's clean energy economy. More than 151,000 workers are now employed across New York in the clean energy sector, and energy efficiency is the largest clean energy technology category in terms of jobs and investments - employing 117,300 workers in 2017 with firms receiving over \$4.1 billion in investments since 2011.

Richard Yancey, FAIA, executive director of the Building Energy Exchange said, “We are thrilled that the Governor and NYSERDA are launching the Buildings of Excellence competition, continuing their leadership in solving our climate crisis. Buildings are among the most intractable contributors to our State’s harmful greenhouse gases, contributing over 70% of New York City’s total emissions. This dramatic competition and incentive program promises to stimulate the market for real-world, buildable solutions, rewarding the leaders of climate action, and sharing their solutions broadly. The Building Energy Exchange is excited to excited to play a central role in this bold and worthy effort.”

John Banks, president of REBNY said, “The Real Estate Board of New York commends the state of New York for launching the Building of Excellence competition. Our members are leaders in New York’s environmental efforts and are committed to working with stakeholders to build a more environmentally friendly New York. We are proud to support programs like this competition which is critical to meeting the State’s ambitious climate goals.”

Brendan Hall, PE, LEED AP BD+C, Government Affairs chair, Central New York - ASHRAE said, “The technology is there, the technical knowledge is there. The time is right for a few innovative projects to really show the market that net zero energy is both achievable and profitable.”

Georgi Ann Bailey, CAE, Hon. AIANY, executive director, AIA New York State said, “Buildings consume approximately 40% of the energy in the United States, emitting almost half of the carbon dioxide that contributes significantly to climate change. Through its members across New York State and the country, the American Institute of Architects supports efforts to design resilient and sustainable facilities in order to improve our climate and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. NYSERDA’s Building of Excellence Competition to Advance Clean Energy Buildings aligns with AIA New York State’s goals and we are thrilled to be a part of it.”

Chuck Bell, programs director, Advocacy Consumers Union, NYSERDA board member, Buildings of Excellence Advisory Council member said, “The Buildings of Excellence competition will benefit New York consumers by incentivizing the deployment of advanced building designs and innovative energy efficiency technologies. Low- and zero-carbon residential buildings can directly enhance living conditions for building residents, by improving energy efficiency, comfort and habitability. They can also improve air quality for all New Yorkers, by reducing air pollution from fossil fuel combustion.”

To assist with the development of the Buildings of Excellence competition, NYSERDA convened an advisory council comprised of a cross-section of experts with interests in the design, real estate and sustainability space and has partnered with organizations including State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Funding for this program is part of the state’s 10-year, \$5.3 billion Clean Energy Fund and is part of NYSERDA’s \$50 million investment in new construction initiatives that are focused on activity in the multi-family building sector including market rate and low-to-moderate income. More information about this Competition and the funding available can be found on NYSERDA’s website.