



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

Senate Acts to Cut Energy Costs in 24 NNY Towns, Villages

DARREL J. AUBERTINE March 8, 2010

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Municipal power alliance in Franklin, St. Lawrence counties to reduce electricity rates for residents

ALBANY (March 8, 2010)—Legislation that will clear the way for 24 municipalities in St. Lawrence and Franklin counties to develop a municipal power system that will save residents and businesses money on their energy bills has passed the New York State Senate. Sponsored by Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine, the legislation (S.2813B) establishes the North Country Power Authority to finance and operate the system.

“For more than a decade now the Alliance for Municipal Power has been working to establish a municipal power system to provide much needed low-cost power,” said Sen. Aubertine, who is the ranking majority member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee. “This legislation gives these municipalities the ability to finance this project and ensure the accountability standards are there to best serve the public. The aim is to reduce energy costs for homeowners, renters and businesses, which will help families make ends meet and create jobs.”

Since the late 1990s, the Alliance for Municipal Power, based in Canton, has united the interests of 24 towns and villages, and more than 95 supporting organizations—chambers of commerce, colleges, schools, business development corporations, unions, and more—to work toward a goal of providing low-cost municipal power for economic development and a reduced cost of living for residents. The Senator first introduced similar legislation as an Assemblyman and brought it over to the Senate, where he has garnered bipartisan support for the bill. It passed 54-3 today.

“The Senate has again come through to ensure lower energy rates for residents and businesses in these 24 allied towns,” said AMP Chair Robert Best. “Passage of the North Country Power Authority Act again takes that first significant step towards lower rates, energy independence, and better services for AMP communities. We want to thank Senator Aubertine and all the sponsors of the bill for their effort to move this legislation and their commitment to helping AMP advance New York’s important energy goals.”

AMP Vice Chairman Wade Davis said, “Thanks to the leadership of Senator Aubertine and all of our local elected representatives in Albany, we are closer today to what we have been working for over many years—municipal power that will significantly reduce rates and provide more reliable service through local control. Towns, Villages, Libraries, Fire Districts, Chambers of Commerce, and many other groups from across the region have signed on in support of our goal and the Senate has come through again to pass this legislation.”

This legislation to create the North Country Power Authority would provide AMP towns and villages in St. Lawrence and Franklin counties with the ability to explore implementing owning and operating the transmission and distribution of electric power over the next 10 years. This initiative could provide thousands of New Yorkers with significantly reduced rates, more reliable service, and local control. Preliminary studies indicate the annual savings for rate-payers in the millions of dollars, as well as an average system-wide rate reduction of 4 percent.

While towns and villages are allowed by law to form a municipal electric company, the small and rural communities have opted to work together to further reduce costs. AMP’s mission is to establish this regional public power utility through the acquisition and operation of the existing distribution system for communities within the AMP area.

AMP is comprised of the towns of Bombay, Fort Covington, Moira and Westville in Franklin County, and towns of Brasher, Canton, Colton, DeKalb, Edwards, Fowler, Gouverneur, Hermon, Lisbon, Louisville, Madrid, Norfolk, Pierrepoint, Potsdam, Russell, Stockholm, and Waddington and the Villages of Canton, Norwood, and Potsdam in St. Lawrence County.