



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Lowering Energy Costs for Small Businesses

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 23, 2010

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, SMALL BUSINESS, RENEWABLE ENERGY**

### *Senate Passes Small Business Energy Assistance & Advocacy Services Program*

Legislation to reduce energy costs on small businesses in New York State, introduced by Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, passed unanimously in the Senate. The bill is part of a Senate Democratic Majority legislative package that will significantly reduce the costs of energy for homeowners and businesses statewide, putting money back into the pockets of families and making businesses more competitive.

The Small Business Energy Assistance & Advocacy Services Program establishes a “small business energy assistance and advocacy services program” within the Division for Small Business to represent the interests of small businesses in the formulation of New York’s energy policies. Under the provisions of this bill, the newly created program solicits input from the small business community concerning energy assistance needs and develops recommendations for government agencies to respond to those problems programmatically. The program would coordinate with relevant public authorities, the Public Service Commission and utilities to include small businesses in the development of energy assistance programs, provide small businesses with information about existing programs and make referrals to energy assistance specialists.

Rising energy costs throughout the state have had a significant impact on the competitiveness and growth of New York's small businesses. The savings opportunities that are attainable through conservation measures, alternative energy sources, co-generation and net metering, and financing assistance, all require substantial investments of time, money and effort. Unlike larger businesses, small businesses often lack the resources to make these commitments and take full advantage of available programs to assist them in lowering their energy bills.

"The increase of energy costs threaten the viability of small businesses across the State of New York. I introduced the Small Business Energy Assistance & Advocacy Services Program to provide small businesses with the resources necessary to take full advantage of the programs available - including conservation measures, alternative energy sources, co-generation and net-metering, as well as assistance with financing - to reduce the financial burden of energy costs," said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (35th District-NYS).

The legislation establishing the Small Business Energy Assistance & Advocacy Services Program has passed in both houses and will now be sent to the Governor for his signature.