



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt Introduces Bill to Make Low-Cost Hydropower More Accessible

ROBERT G. ORTT April 7, 2015

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Bill Would Make Hydropower Available for Housing Authorities and Hospitals in Specific Counties

Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I–North Tonawanda) has introduced a bill (S4414-A) that would make low-cost hydropower easily available to hospitals and municipal housing authorities located in Niagara and Orleans counties. This power would be made possible through New York Power Authority’s Niagara Power Project in Lewiston.

These types of institutions in the two counties would not be required to go through the eligibility process that’s currently in place for allotments of power through the Niagara Power Project.

“Niagara Falls is a powerful resource in our very own backyard, and certain facilities should be able to take advantage of its ability to produce cost-effective electricity provided by the Niagara Power Project,” said **Sen. Ortt**. “Making hydroelectricity easily accessible to housing authorities and hospitals in Niagara and Orleans counties will help those in need while spurring economic development.”

The idea to implement this bill came after Senator Ortt realized how many entities, including the Niagara Falls Housing Authority, are not currently eligible to take advantage of low-cost hydropower.

“Providing and maintaining quality housing in addition to an array of self-sustaining services require a budget that currently is not further reduced by rising power costs, and leaves a shortfall in our overall spending plan,” said **Niagara Falls Housing Authority Executive Director Stephanie W. Cowart**. “Having this lower power cost allocation will allow the Niagara Falls Housing Authority to easily continue its vital role in improving lives and acting as a community safety net for residents in most need of assistance.”

Interim CEO of Orleans Community Health Medina Memorial Hospital Wendy Jacobson said, “Cost containment is essential to smaller hospitals. Reducing operating expenses through lower cost hydropower will help us to continue serving health care needs in our community. Along with physician alignment and affiliation with larger institutions to share resources, cost containment measures such as lower cost hydropower will assist Medina Memorial Hospital in achieving a healthy future.”

Eligible facilities that do not fall under the category of a housing authority or hospital would still need to apply for low-cost hydropower as long as they are within a 30-mile radius of the Niagara Power Project.

The bill would take effect immediately.