



ALBERT A. STIRPE, JR.
Assemblyman 127th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on
Economic Development, Job Creation,
Commerce and Industry

COMMITTEES
Agriculture
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August 13, 2026

Empire State Development

RE: Data Center Community Investment Fund Framework

Dear ESD President Hope Knight,

Please accept these comments in response to the Data Center Community Investment Framework Policy Outline posted by Empire State Development (ESD). I strongly urge ESD to explicitly include building energy upgrades – including heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, battery storage, rooftop solar, and thermal energy networks – as investments included in the Community Investment Framework. By encouraging host communities to invest these private developer funds in building decarbonization, ESD can simultaneously reduce energy costs, strengthen local economies, create good-paying jobs, and accelerate New York's clean energy transition. This approach is fully consistent with ESD's mission to leverage private investment to advance economic development and clean energy across the state.

As Chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Development, Job Creation and Commerce and Industry, I support policies that strengthen New York's economy, encourage private investment, and create high-quality jobs across the state.

New York's clean energy transition is already producing measurable economic benefits. Since 2023, the state has added more than 6,000 clean energy jobs, bringing total employment in the sector to more than 184,00 workers¹ – the highest level since statewide tracking began. These jobs generate more than \$1.3 billion in gross state product, and approximately \$897 million in labor income.² Entry-level workers in the clean energy sector also earn an average wage premium of 12 percent over comparable occupations outside the industry.³

Building decarbonization represents the largest segment of New York's clean energy workforce, accounting for approximately 73 percent of clean energy jobs and 88 percent of clean energy establishments.⁴ These businesses are overwhelmingly local contractors and specialized service providers, with 61 percent employing five or fewer workers.⁵ Investments in building energy updates therefore deliver direct benefits to local economies by supporting electricians, plumbers, HVAC contracts, energy auditors, solar installers, and other skilled trades across the state.

Demand for these projects is constrained by available incentives. Nearly half of contractors report they would hire additional workers if more financial incentives for building

¹ 2025 New York Clean Energy Industry Report, page 4

² 2025 New York Clean Energy Industry Report, page 78

³ 2025 New York Clean Energy Industry Report, page 5

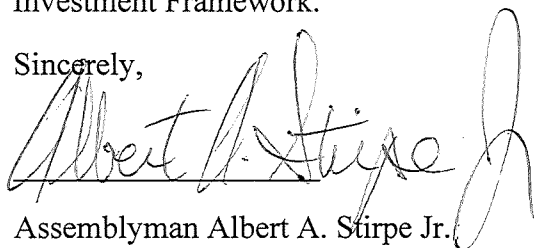
⁴ 2025 New York Clean Energy Industry Report, page 10

⁵ 2025 New York Clean Energy Industry Report, pages 10 & 27

decarbonization were available.⁶ Encouraging Community Investment Framework dollars to support these projects would therefore translate private data center investment into expanded employment opportunities for New Yorkers.

As private investment becomes an increasingly important driver⁷ of New York's clean energy economy, the Community Investment Framework presents an opportunity to ensure that data center development delivers lasting benefits for host communities. Explicitly including building energy upgrades as eligible investments would advance economic development, lower energy costs, strengthen local contractors and small businesses and help achieve the State's climate goals. I respectfully urge ESD to incorporate these investments into the final Community Investment Framework.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Albert A. Stirpe Jr.", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Assemblyman Albert A. Stirpe Jr.

Assembly Economic Development Chair

⁶ 2025 New York Clean Energy Industry Report, page 26

⁷ 2025 New York Clean Energy Industry Report, page 5