

ASTORIA ENERGY II: A STATE-OF-THE-ART CLEAN POWER PLANT THAT BENEFITS QUEENS AND NEW YORK CITY

By Charles McCall, president and CEO, Astoria Energy II

Today, hundreds of union workers are in Astoria, Queens working to complete New York City's cleanest and most efficient power plant, the 550 megawatt Astoria Energy II. The project will meet its mandate from the state-owned New York Power Authority (NYPA) to provide economic, clean and reliable power to New York City and NYPA's customers – including New York City schools and the MTA – by the summer of 2011.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), a leading environmental group, has strongly endorsed this project. The NRDC knows that Astoria Energy II will literally clean the air in Queens and New York City by displacing older, less efficient and dirtier power plants like NYPA's recently shut down nearby Poletti plant. Astoria Energy II is expected to decrease nitrogen oxide air emissions (NOx) by 1,222 tons per year and reduce sulfur oxide emissions (SOx) by 1,542 tons per year – an astonishing nearly 18 percent cut in both pollutants – by displacing currently operational in-city power plants, including Queens plants.

Ashok Gupta, Air and Energy Program Director for the NRDC, said at the time NYPA selected Astoria II, “This new state-of-the-art natural gas fueled power plant will improve New York City's air quality by displacing electricity production from older, dirtier and less efficient generating capacity. When combined with aggressive energy efficiency programs like the state's 15 by 15 Plan, the result will be improvement in public health, reduction in global warming pollution and the lowering of electricity bills.”

While improving air quality Astoria Energy II will also improve electric system reliability and provide consumer savings. The new power plant will increase the amount of in-city generated electricity by nearly 4%, filling the void created by Poletti's closing and reducing the city's dependence on less reliable imports. NYPA has noted this project ties in with both Governor Paterson's and Mayor Bloomberg's goals for shoring up the City's energy infrastructure in order to meet the City's rising power demand. By adding a new and more efficient power source to New York's power grid, the Astoria Energy II will also lower the City's wholesale electric prices, saving Queens and other City ratepayers at least \$100 million per year.

Further, while not part of any federal stimulus package, Astoria Energy II will employ more than 1,000 building trade employees, working an estimated 1.6 million hours during the plant's construction. With well over 500 workers on site during its peak construction this year, the project is a real shot in the arm for the local economy that continues to face high unemployment. Whether it's the electricians, boilermakers, pipe fitters, carpenters, operating engineers, cement masons, millwrights or laborers, everyone is dedicated to completing their work in a safe and efficient manner, by the summer of 2011.

We will continue to update the community on the progress of the project. Astoria Energy II will soon to be the cleanest and most efficient generating plant operating in our City. It is the kind of energy project – improving air quality, lowering electric costs and creating jobs – that all Queens residents can join environmentalists and labor leaders in supporting.