



YUDELKA TAPIA
Assemblymember 86th District
Bronx County

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DATE: January 8th, 2026

RE: Comments on 2026 Draft RGGI Operating Plan Amendment

Dear NYSERDA,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit comments in support of the Draft 2026 RGGI Operating Plan Amendment, as presented at the December 18, 2025 Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative stakeholder meeting.

I write in my capacity as the Assemblymember representing the 86th Assembly District in the Bronx, where utility affordability, environmental justice, and economic opportunity are everyday concerns for the families I serve. I strongly support the proposed increase in RGGI funding for the EmPower+ program and urge NYSERDA to advance the amended spending plan for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors.

EmPower+ is a critical program for low- and moderate-income households across New York State, particularly in communities like the Bronx. The program provides no-cost home energy assessments, direct-install efficiency measures, and meaningful financial support for electrification and weatherization upgrades such as insulation, air sealing, heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and necessary electrical upgrades. These investments help families reduce energy waste, lower monthly utility bills, and live in healthier, safer homes.

In the Bronx, where many residents live in one-to-four family homes and a significant share are renters, the need for programs like EmPower+ is especially acute. Rising energy costs continue to strain household budgets, and aging housing stock often leaves families exposed to inefficient and expensive heating systems. Expanding RGGI investment in EmPower+ will directly address these challenges by reducing energy consumption and providing long-term affordability for households that can least afford rising utility bills.

The proposed funding increase also aligns squarely with the 2025 New York State Energy Plan and the Climate Action Council's Scoping Plan, both of which identify electrification and energy efficiency as core strategies for reducing emissions, improving housing quality, and prioritizing benefits for low- and moderate-income households and disadvantaged communities. I am encouraged that the draft amendment estimates that approximately 90 percent of EmPower+ funding will directly benefit LMI households and disadvantaged communities.

Beyond household savings, EmPower+ plays a vital role in economic development and job creation. The building electrification and energy efficiency sector is the backbone of New York's clean energy economy, with contractors in this space accounting for the majority of clean energy establishments statewide. Residential building activity is a key driver of this growth, and State incentives such as EmPower+ are among the most widely used tools supporting contractors and workers. In communities like the Bronx, where unemployment rates remain higher than the state average, clean energy jobs created through programs like EmPower+ provide family-sustaining wages and pathways into stable careers.

Importantly, a significant share of clean energy jobs are held by residents of disadvantaged communities. Continued and expanded investment in EmPower+ ensures that the transition to clean energy delivers tangible economic benefits to the same communities that have historically borne the brunt of high energy costs and environmental burdens.

For these reasons, I strongly support the proposed increase in RGGI funding for the EmPower+ program and respectfully urge the NYSERDA Board of Directors to approve the Draft 2026 RGGI Operating Plan Amendment at its January 26, 2026 meeting.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to advancing energy affordability, environmental justice, and economic opportunity for New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Yudelka Tapia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Assemblymember Yudelka Tapia
86th Assembly District