
From: Sarah Miles Smiley <sarah.smiley@mothersoutfront.org>
Sent: Friday, January 9, 2026 4:52 PM
To: erda.sm.rggiprograms
Subject: Public Comment in Support of Expanded EmPower+ Funding

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Dear NYSERDA,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2026 Draft RGGI Operating Plan Amendment.

Mothers Out Front is a member-led climate justice organization. We are mothers, sisters, aunts, grandmothers and other caregivers coming together to make climate justice a priority issue that our decision-makers can no longer ignore. We are building a powerful grassroots movement to ensure a swift, complete and just transition away from fossil fuels and toward a clean and renewable energy future where our children and families can thrive, not just survive.

Mothers Out Front strongly supports the increased funding levels proposed for the EmPower+ program, which helps low-and-moderate income New Yorkers make improvements that will save energy and money. Through this program, eligible households can receive no-cost comprehensive home energy assessments to identify how they can save energy, no-cost direct install improvements identified during the assessment, and funding for energy efficiency and electrification improvements. These improvements include air sealing, insulation, heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and electrical service and wiring upgrades. Such measures also make homes safer, more comfortable, and healthier, particularly for children as they are more vulnerable to extreme temperatures and indoor air pollutants generated by the combustion of fossil fuels.

There is significant need for this program given the aging building stock in New York, which is the largest driver of greenhouse gas emissions in the state, and because roughly half of New York households are low-to-moderate income households. These households face disproportionately high energy costs, and reducing that burden through building improvements can redirect income to other critical needs such as food and healthcare.

In order to ensure healthy indoor air quality, affordable utility bills, and to reduce our state's planet-warming emissions, it is critical that New Yorkers have access to weatherized, energy efficient, electric homes. Increased funding for the EmPower+ program is in line with the 2025 State Energy Plan, which finds that electrification and energy efficiency are core strategies to drive energy savings in residential buildings; keeping buildings comfortable; and support reliability of the electric grid, and which recommends that NYSERDA continue to prioritize financial incentives to address energy performance and housing quality for LMI housing and buildings in Disadvantaged Communities.

We hope that the NYSERDA Board of Directors approve the new funding levels proposed for the EmPower+ program in the Draft 2026 RGGI Operating Plan Amendment at the Board meeting on January 26, 2026.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Smiley

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