



NYPIRG

NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP

January 9, 2026

NYSERDA

rggiprograms@nyserda.ny.gov

Re: Comments on the Draft 2026 RGGI Operating Plan Amendment in Support of Increased Funding Levels for the EmPower+ Program

Greetings:

NYPIRG appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in response to the 2026 Draft RGGI Operating Plan Amendment presented at the December 18, 2025 RGGI stakeholder meeting.

NYPIRG is a non-partisan public education organization that works to examine important public policy issues, produce studies, and engage New Yorkers through public education campaigns to protect our environment and public health.

NYPIRG fully supports the new funding levels proposed for the EmPower+ program in the Draft 2026 RGGI Operating Plan Amendment. EmPower+ helps low-and-moderate income (LMI) households save energy and money toward energy improvements made to their primary residence.¹ The program focuses on one-to-four family households.

Through EmPower+, eligible New Yorkers can receive funding toward the cost of the energy efficiency and electrification improvements, including air sealing, insulation, heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and electrical service and wiring upgrades.² This program will continue to help make clean, safe energy more affordable, accessible, and reliable for Low-Moderate Income (LMI) New Yorkers.

Additionally, the 2025 NY State Energy Plan recommends that NYSERDA continue to prioritize financial incentives to address energy performance and housing quality for LMI housing and buildings in Disadvantaged Communities.³ Approving this funding will assist in the completion of New York's recently finalized Energy Plan.

While NYPIRG is pleased that these important energy efficiency programs will be funded for the next two years, we urge NYSERDA to commit to full funding for the out years and work to secure that funding. Predictable support for these programs is essential for a successful transition.

¹ <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/EmPower-New-York-Program>

² <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/EmPower-New-York-Program>

³ 2025 State Energy Plan, Volume II, Chapter 8 Buildings, *Sector 4.1.2 Prioritizing an Affordable and Equitable Transition for Low-to-Moderate income housing and buildings in Disadvantaged Communities*, page 16: "New York State...should continue to prioritize and coordinate public support across energy and housing programs to address energy performance and housing quality for LMI housing and buildings in DACs, with State leadership from ...NYSERDA...."

In conclusion, NYPIRG fully supports the new funding levels proposed for the EmPower+ program and respectfully recommends that the NYSERDA Board of Directors approve those funding levels at the Board meeting on January 26, 2026.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Wood
Senior Environmental Program Coordinator