



# **NEW YORK STATE BLACK, PUERTO RICAN, HISPANIC, AND ASIAN LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS**

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New York State Energy Research and Development Authority  
17 Columbia Circle  
Albany, NY 12203-6399

## **DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY**

Dear Members of the Board:

On behalf of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus, we write to express our unequivocal support for the EmPower+ program and to urge its continued funding. This critical initiative helps advance economic and environmental justice by alleviating the disproportionate energy burden on working class communities and creating pathways to careers in green energy.

Approximately half of all New York households are low to moderate income (LMI), and our districts are home to many disadvantaged communities. For these residents, high energy costs are not just an inconvenience but a financial strain that forces impossible choices between heating and other essential needs. EmPower+ directly addresses this crisis by providing no cost assessments and critical upgrades, such as insulation and modern heat pumps, that permanently lower utility bills and improve housing quality.

We applaud the program's targeted focus, which aligns with the Climate Action Council's Scoping Plan. By prioritizing LMI households, EmPower+ ensures that the benefits of the clean energy transition are equitably distributed and centered around the needs of those who require it most. The recent expansion of eligibility by the Public Service Commission is a welcome step that will extend this lifeline to even more struggling families, including the more than 40 percent of LMI residents who are renters in one to four family homes.

Furthermore, EmPower+ is a powerful engine for equitable economic development, creating high quality, local clean energy jobs across the state. The fact that disadvantaged communities already account for nearly 60,000 clean energy jobs, roughly one third of the state's total, demonstrates the transformative potential of targeted investment.

In summary, the EmPower+ program is a strong pillar for a just and sustainable future for New York. It reduces racial and economic disparities in energy affordability, improves public health, and incentivizes economic growth while fulfilling the state's climate mandates. We strongly urge you to ensure this program receives the sustained support and resources necessary to meet the immense need across our state.

Sincerely,

Hon. Michaelle C. Solages  
Chair, Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus