



Urban Agenda
Convener of NYC Apollo Alliance



February 23, 2009

Governor David Paterson
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson,

Now that President Obama has signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, an historic opportunity exists to strengthen New York's economy in a way that ensures long-term, equitable economic development and environmental sustainability. The New York City Apollo Alliance applauds your creation of the New York State Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Cabinet, headed by Timothy Gilchrist, to oversee stimulus spending.

We recognize the need to act quickly, but we must also act responsibly. The opportunity to rebuild our economy in a just and sustainable manner should not be squandered. Creating low-paying jobs that force families to live in poverty with no benefits is not an economic stimulus and, in the long run, will bring another economic crisis. On the other hand, creating good paying green-collar jobs that provide benefits and pathways out of poverty protects workers and opens the door to economic and career advancement. The Recovery and Reinvestment Cabinet must ensure that stimulus money is spent in a manner that supports a new economy and avoids the mistakes of the past.

We urge you to adopt the following principles when evaluating which projects to fund with stimulus monies to ensure that the stimulus creates good jobs in green industries and helps rebuild our rapidly disappearing middle class.

The New York City Apollo Alliance is a coalition of labor, environment, social justice, and business organizations, and our principles reflect this diverse cross-section of interests. Adopting these principles when deciding which projects to fund with stimulus dollars will advance our collective vision of a new green economy and demonstrate a true commitment to creating a more just, sustainable and prosperous state for **all** New Yorkers.

New York City Apollo Alliance Principles for Effective Stimulus Fund Disbursement

1. Transparency

Stimulus funds must be disbursed with complete transparency. The State should comply with Federal reporting requirements, as well as track collateral benefits, such as job creation and



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energy use reduction. Tracking and disseminating this information will help engage partners for advancing your ambitious green agenda for the state. Citizens must be able to see how their tax dollars are being spent and what results can be expected.

2. Prioritize Projects with Green Principles across all Areas of Stimulus Spending

To fully realize the economic and environmental benefits, every infrastructure project receiving stimulus funds should meet relevant green standards. While a significant amount of money in the stimulus bill has been dedicated specifically for environmentally sustainable programs, infrastructure projects that adhere to green standards should be the priority in every category. For example, energy efficiency programs and projects should be prioritized because they reduce energy use, lower costs, increase consumer liquidity, enhance safety and comfort, and decrease emissions.

3. Give New York City its fair share

a. Fully fund public transit

New York City's transit authority is in a profound financial crisis. Severe cuts coupled with drastic fare increases will hit the working class the hardest and delay economic recovery. While large projects, like the 2nd Avenue Subway line, are in need of federal funds, there are several smaller projects, such as rehabilitating subway stations, which also need to be funded. Rehabilitating subway stations and modernizing signal systems ensures safer, more environmentally sound stations and also employs union labor, guaranteeing family sustaining wages and benefits.

b. Prioritize the repair of existing transit infrastructure

It is **not** required that highway funds from the stimulus be allocated to building new highways. New York State and City must adopt a "fix it first" approach that repairs and rehabilitates existing infrastructure before looking to build completely new systems. New York City's vast infrastructure system is in desperate need of repair.

Road and bridge repair and maintenance create over 47,000 jobs for every \$1.25 billion invested, in contrast to building new roads and bridges, which creates only 43,200 jobs for every \$1.25 billion spent. Repairing existing infrastructure not only creates and maintains good jobs, it also encourages smart growth and sustainable communities.

4. Create local green collar jobs

It is a sad reality that New York City's middle class is rapidly disappearing. Creating green jobs is not enough. We must ensure that the jobs we create are good green collar jobs providing healthy and safe work environments, family sustaining wages, benefits, and pathways out of poverty. In order to build our green economy, the Cabinet should prioritize projects that include:



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- a. Job Standards- Ensure that the jobs created pay prevailing wage and prioritize contractors that offer family sustaining wages, benefits, and career opportunities.
- b. Local Purchasing- Promoting local purchasing brings money and jobs in communities by creating jobs locally and encouraging the growth of local manufacturing and businesses.
- c. Links with job-training programs- We must ensure that the workers that we train are able to be placed. Coordinating green jobs training programs with programs that receive stimulus funds will link potential employees with employers.
- d. Lifecycle Sustainability Standards- We must meet standards of social, health and environmental performance with attention to full lifecycle concerns.

Thank you for your continued leadership. We look forward to working with you to ensure that New York is rebuilt in a manner that is sustainable, prosperous, and just.

With best regards,

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