

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 13th, 2020

Over the past year, County Planning Directors, Economic Developers, Private Businesses and the Southern Tier 8 Regional Board have been assessing the energy needs for eight counties in the Southern Tier region (Broome, Tioga, Tompkins, Otsego, Schoharie, Cortland, Delaware, and Chenango). **BELOW IS THE TIMELINE OF OUR ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT PROCESS:**

- **APRIL 2019** — The Regional Board **retained LaBella Associates to develop a data-driven regional assessment of energy infrastructure across the region.**
- **AUGUST 2019** — LaBella **began exploring additional energy needs with local businesses across the region.**
- **OCTOBER 2019** — **A public educational event was held to discuss the Regional Energy Infrastructure Program & share funding opportunities available to municipal leaders for their energy improvement needs.**
- **OCTOBER 2019 - FEBRUARY 2020** — **Businesses volunteered to work with LaBella Associates to assess more specific needs, as approved by the Regional Board.**
- **MARCH 2020** — **A draft baseline report was presented by LaBella Associates that also included 7 projects engineers developed to satisfy local energy needs. The example projects were developed independently and prior to new state energy guidelines, these were presented as private sector suggestions. These are not for the Regional Board to approve or pursue. Future development would be an undertaking from the engaged businesses or communities and would require a deeper analysis and additional time with a team of experts in the energy infrastructure field.**
- **APRIL 2020** — **Staff collected approximately 75 comments and suitable modifications to the report will be addressed by April 30th, 2020 so the final report can be available to grant writers to be used in the upcoming annual funding cycle.**

As the leading regional agency in the Southern Tier Region, it is our goal and mission to always hear what matters to our community, assess the issues, and continually to do our utmost to offer solutions and support opportunities to grow our economy throughout the region. **Below is a breakdown of what led us to conduct this study, what these findings and proposed ideas actually mean, and what is the most important thing to us as an economic development agency regarding our community in particular right now during this time of crisis:**

WHY DID WE LAUNCH THIS STUDY?

As a leading economic development agency in the Southern Tier, our goal is to **continually find solutions to build our regional economy and support our communities.**

THE CHALLENGE.

In 2017, while developing the region's 5-year plan, **several businesses brought forward energy infrastructure limitations & challenges with "interruptible power" practices.** The Regional Board **heard the need for assistance and secured funding to evaluate our energy sources, distribution and uses across the Southern Tier.**

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY.

The purpose of the study was to offer a baseline of data, and begin the conversation on what may be some feasible, creative, and alternative solutions for businesses that sought assistance. The study included a **collaborative effort of each member county to offer local communities & grant writers a data-driven document that can be used in their pursuit for preparing future funding applications.** Labella brought together accessible data and summarized energy uses across a consistent platform for the 8 county region, that covers 3 unique state-defined economic development regions (Southern Tier, Central and Mohawk Valley). While it should be understood that the Southern Tier 8 Regional Board was very engaged in developing the infrastructure assessment and approved the concept of exploration for the example projects, the **Regional Board does not have the technical expertise to assess the value of the proposed example projects, this study was provided to offer examples of projects that could be developed locally and inspire creativity.** Future development would be an undertaking from the engaged businesses or communities and **would require a deeper analysis and additional time with a team of experts** in the energy infrastructure field.

PREPARING FOR RECOVERY DURING A TIME OF CRISIS.

The Staff is reviewing approximately 75 public comments regarding the infrastructure assessment and plans to release the final report by **April 30th, 2020** so communities can avoid delay and prepare their CFA applications for this year's regular funding cycle. **We feel strongly that the best thing we can do is to work together with our fellow planners, businesses, and community leaders and to continually do our utmost - to create new opportunities for our local economy while also being fully committed to the health of our community. The Regional Board is not only finalizing the regional infrastructure assessment, but also launching the annual federal funding cycle for 2021** and assisting the communities with COVID-19 resiliency efforts so that we can thrive, survive and bounce back during difficult times.