



BALCONY INFRASTRUCTURE MISSION STATEMENT

The Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY) was founded in the spirit of achieving common sense, common ground solutions to the most pressing public policy issues confronting New Yorkers. Infrastructure is perhaps the most critical policy issue currently impacting the well-being of our citizenry and the future of our city and its economy. And it is in dire need of repair and restoration. Infrastructure affects all of us regardless of economic status – from work, housing, education, and public safety to the air we breathe and the water we drink. It cannot be ignored. And yet it is hugely underfunded and underappreciated – only grabbing headlines in the wake of crises such as the collapse of a bridge, a train crash, a major storm, or a burst water main.

From crumbling, dangerous roads, bridges, subways and commuter rail, to outdated water, sewage, energy, and gas systems to overcrowded, deteriorating classrooms and hospitals, courtrooms and prisons, New York’s infrastructure is woefully inadequate to meet current demands. This will only increase as the city’s population is expected to grow by 1 million in the next two decades. Our collective inaction presents a growing danger to all New Yorkers and inhibits the City’s growth and prosperity.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) 2013 report, 4,718 New York State bridges are functionally obsolete, 60% of our major roads are in poor or mediocre condition and 2,169 are structurally deficient – numbers that, obviously, don’t account for the recent major damage that occurred as a result of the storms and long winter of 2015. Our schools need \$2.1 billion in infrastructure funding. In New York City, according to a recent report by the Center for an Urban Future, the average age of our sewer mains is 84 years old and our water mains average 69 years, resulting in more than 400 leaks in almost every year since 1998, an average of 4 water main breaks a day, and the loss of 24% of the water piped into the City. Additionally, 60% of Con Edison gas mains are made of outmoded and leak-prone materials, 37% of our subway signal systems have exceeded their 50-year useful life. Even our vaunted hospitals are, on average, 57 years old.

Recognizing that infrastructure is in crisis, and that this is an issue that equally affects both our business and labor members, BALCONY has decided to undertake an Infrastructure Initiative. Our BALCONY initiative will mobilize our members, as well as advocates and experts, in an innovative way to address the deplorable state of infrastructure in New York State and specifically in the New York City metro region. We will seek to raise civic awareness, explore solutions, and accomplish meaningful change in infrastructure funding and policy through public education, forums, media engagement, dialogue, lobbying, and legislation.

A concerted, sincere, and nonpartisan effort to repair and modernize our infrastructure so that it is functional and up to date, is a necessity that cannot wait and requires the efforts and cooperation of business, contractors, building trade unions, advocates, experts, and our elected officials.



BALCONY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Dick Anderson, *New York Building Congress*

Steve Anderson, *InfrastructureUSA.org*

Dean Angelakos, *Parsons*

Kevin Corbett, *AECOM*

John Costello, *Consultant*

Cynthia DiBartolo, *Tigress Financial*

Mike Elmendorf, *Rebuild NY Now*

Laura Gallo, *Building Congress*

Jason Goldstein, *Liberty Natural Gas*

Lou Gordon, *BALCONY*

Bill Hohlfeld, *Journalist*

**Denis M. Hughes, *Former President,
NYS AFI-CIO***

Jerry Kremer, *NY AREA*

Sarah Biser, *McCarter English*

**Chelsea Lemar, *Professional Women in
Construction***

Michael Locker, *Locker Associates*

Alan Lubin, *BALCONY Founder*

**Dr. Thomas Mackell, Jr., *International
Longshoremen's Association***

Joyce Miller, *Tier One Strategies*

David Pollak, *Pegasus Capital*

**Anthony Potenza, *New York Labor Health
Care Alliance***

**Denise Richardson, *General Contractors
Association***

**John Skinner, *Loal 46 Metallic Lathers and
Reinforcing Iron Workers***

Michael Yellin, *LRA Consulting*

Nicholas Kapustinsky, *BALCONY*



On Thursday (May 21st, 2015), BALCONY (the Business and Labor Coalition of New York) in conjunction with NY AREA (the New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance), held its plenary meeting regarding BALCONY's new Infrastructure Initiative. The event featured a committee composed of leaders from both business and labor who came together to begin the process of coalition building and idea exchange regarding the deteriorating state of infrastructure in New York State and across the nation.

The breakfast meeting featured speakers that included policy makers, union leaders, representatives of environmental and consumer groups, and sponsors of proposed infrastructure projects.



Arthur Kremer, Chairman, NY-AREA



Michael Locker, President, Locker Associates



Denis Hughes, Senior Operating Partner, STONEPEAK Infrastructure Partners



Joyce Miller, Tier One Strategies



Steve Anderson, Founder, Infrastructure ICA



Lou Gordon, Director, BALCONY

Among the projects discussed were:

- The NYC Capital Plan
- The MTA Capital Plan
- Port Ambrose LNG Terminal (700 jobs)
- DeLalio Sod Farm Solar Array (70 jobs)
- Constitution Pipeline (1,300 jobs)
- Hudson River Rail Tunnel
- Cross-harbor rail freight tunnel
- Deepwater Wind (2,864 jobs)
- Caithness II on Long Island (400 jobs)



According to event organizer and director of BALCONY, Lou Gordon, “As a coalition and alliance we hope to find common ground between all of these players to evaluate these projects and how to improve our state’s infrastructure in order to create good jobs, improve the safety and sustainability of our communities and grow New York’s economy.

This is the time for a serious conversation on how to address infrastructure in our state and to develop an action plan for encouraging civic engagement through education, outreach. It’s time to demonstrate the depth and breadth of public support for upgrading our infrastructure projects and the willingness to pay for it. It’s time to engage our citizens, our neighbors, and our elected officials on what may well be the most critical public policy issue of our time.”

Jerry Kremer, Chairman of NY AREA said that it was time for job creators and supporters of infrastructure investment begin to “play offense” in order to kick start projects and initiatives that will speak to our job and infrastructure deficits. He stressed that dialogue between business and labor is key in addressing our state and our nation’s infrastructure concerns and lauded the gathering as an excellent example of bringing together the various interested parties in a context where there could be a productive conversation.

Other speakers at the event included Richard Thomas, Executive Director of NY AREA, who reiterated the need for serious investment in infrastructure, specifically in energy and power projects, noting that “not only our future but also our existing infrastructure is under attack from a variety of interest groups and political roadblocks.”

Michael Locker, founder and President of Locker Associates, and a consultant to many labor unions and building trades gave his opinion that it is critical to consider environmental concerns, reports, and findings in deciding how and where to support the infrastructure projects discussed at the meeting. However he agreed that the need to repair our infrastructure, invest in its future, and create good jobs in the process is an urgent need.

Dennis Hughes, former President of the New York State AFL-CIO, spoke about the need and opportunity presented by potential partnerships between the public and private sector in investment in infrastructure.

Joyce Miller, an infrastructure expert and adjunct professor at Columbia University, spoke about the acute need to consider how infrastructure projects are funded. Citing the fact that government in general is afraid of the debt vs. tax equation, Mrs. Miller suggested that union pension funds could be used to fund infrastructure projects; making the argument that infrastructure, as an elastic market, is an excellent investment opportunity for those funds.



Finally, Steve Anderson, Managing Director of Infrastructure USA, spoke about the need to instigate a robust national dialogue with citizens, and demand greater political will of our leaders. He emphasized that the investments we make in infrastructure are generational responsibilities that present significant opportunities. And, Anderson stressed the need to communicate about all infrastructure issues in plain language. Quoting the late TV host Fred Rogers (“Mr. Rogers Neighborhood”), Mr. Anderson concluded by saying “if you can talk about it, you can deal with it,” and regarding infrastructure, we are neither talking nor dealing with these critical issues.”

The event concluded with a discussion between the various experts in the room, ending with a consensus that there is a serious need to raise awareness, increase political will, and encourage dialogue between the key business and labor groups as well as voting in order to address the deplorable state of infrastructure in our country.