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***ABLI warns, Permitting, Application & Inspection Delays are costing Long Island jobs as New York Solar Energy Industries Association acknowledges their industry is being forced to furlough employees while needed permits remain buried in red tape***

***Recognizing the threat, Brookhaven Township now becomes second L.I. municipality to seek state approval for industry self-certification***

(Hauppauge, New York) – As pandemic-induced unemployment continues to threaten the region’s economic recovery, the Town of Brookhaven is now the latest Long Island municipality to urge New York State (NYS) to pass legislation that would grant local municipalities the ability to establish a self-certification program for building permit applications and construction documents filed with local governments.

Brookhaven joins a coalition that includes the Town of Huntington, the Association for a Better Long Island (ABLI), Long Island Association (LIA), and the Long Island Builders Institute (LIBI), who have been advocating for this critical bill as a means to jumpstart Long Island’s COVID-19 economy recovery. The program already exists in New York City and the city has benefited for decades.

#### From cumbersome to crisis

The New York Solar Energy Industries Association has also joined the coalition as its members are experiencing extreme permitting delays which, in turn, is hindering Long Island’s ability to convert to green energy. Even worse, a number of association members are being forced to lay off employees, eliminating jobs meant to improve the region’s environment.

"This legislation would be a game changer for Long Island's clean energy economy. EmPower recently furloughed some employees because of lengthy permitting review times, despite having a massive pipeline of booked work. This legislation proposes a more efficient system that will increase speed, but also leverage the critical function of the building department professionals," said **David Schieren, CEO, EmPower Solar.**

#### The needed remedy

As the bi-county region begins to develop a post-COVID-19 economic recovery strategy, the coalition is backing legislative bills S1003 and S1004 now being considered in Albany or, as an alternative, include the language in this year's state budget. In a letter to NYS officials, the coalition reminded that, aside from the considerable benefits of self-certification, its implementation is at zero cost to New York State and local municipalities.

Economists have determined that self-certification programs spur economic development by reducing red tape, expediting reviews, and thereby increasing financial investment and job creation in the municipality. Recognizing the advantages, several Long Island municipalities strongly support the establishment of self-certification programs and the Town of Huntington recently passed Resolution 2020-609 that places it firmly on record urging the NYS Legislature and Governor to enact such legislation.

The legislation would allow the issuance of a permit based upon a certification by a registered architect or engineer licensed in NYS and that the application meets fire prevention and building codes. The program would reduce the backlog of applications the Long Island development community is facing where, as a result of COVID-19, some building departments have backlogs over 100 days. For the local municipalities to move forward in establishing a self-certification program, it requires the State Legislature and the Governor to grant them the authority.

#### Public-private advocates for self-certification

"Self-certification is a win-win for Long Island. It creates jobs and economic activity and saves local municipal resources that can be redirected to other responsibilities. There is no reason why Long Island shouldn't have the same economic development advantage as New York City which has been permitting self-certification since 1995. In this era of a painful, pandemic-induced recession, Long Island should be given every tool to rebuild its economy. This legislation would allow significant progress in achieving that goal," said **Kyle Strober, Executive Director, Association for a Better Long Island.**

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"My legislation would help our local economy recover from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by allow professional experts to self-certify permits. This will help clear backlogs that have bogged down building departments and jump-start construction and good-paying union jobs at a time when our region desperately needs it," stated **NYS Senator James Gaughran, 5<sup>th</sup> District.**

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**Supervisor Chad A. Lupinacci, Town of Huntington** stated, "In December, the Town of Huntington urged New York State to give the Town the option to accept construction documents based upon their certification by a New York State-licensed architect or professional engineer, which, if implemented, would reduce operating expenses and improve efficiency in the building permit approval process."

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“Allowing local governments to implement a professional self-certification program would increase private investment and create new jobs while expediting municipal reviews for landlords and tenants, and thus we support state legislation that authorizes this for Long Island,” said **Kevin Law, CEO & President, Long Island Association.**

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“It is clear to all concerned that it is essential that our municipalities make their building permit process more efficient during these very difficult times so that millions of dollars in private investment can be made all across Long Island, thus putting more of our citizens back to work. This legislation would allow each municipality to do so after they have already approved the construction of the project through its entire review process. It has worked extremely well in NYC and there is no reason why it cannot work in all parts of New York State,” said **Mitchell H. Pally, Chief Executive Officer, Long Island Builders Institute.**

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“In December 2020, I sponsored a resolution urging the NYS Legislature and Governor to enact legislation put forth by Senator Gaughran that will allow self-certification. When enacted, it will be a safe, cost-saving, and more efficient process improving the quality of services to the public,” stated **Councilman Mark Cuthbertson, Town of Huntington.**

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