

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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SECRETARY OF STATE

March 29, 2024

Doreen M. Harris
President and Chief Executive Officer
New York State Energy and Research Development Authority
17 Columbia Circle
Albany, NY 12203-6399

President Harris,

The New York State Department of State (DOS) is deeply invested in working with municipalities to transform their communities into cleaner and more connected, vibrant, and equitable places. By advancing smart growth land use patterns, communities will be compact, mixed-use, and support multimodal transportation, which is an effective method to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Through our partnership with NYSERDA on the application to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program, specifically the proposed *Smart Growth Acceleration Program*, DOS will be able to dramatically expand its support for emissions-reducing planning, zoning, and predevelopment activities in New York communities. Doing so will ultimately help communities develop and redevelop in ways where the need for private vehicles is reduced, access to non-vehicular forms of transportation is greater, dense new development of decarbonized buildings in existing population centers is possible, and healthy, more climate resilient amenities and economic opportunities for daily life are available.

If NYSERDA is awarded funding from EPA through the CPRG program, DOS will utilize its subaward for the proposed *Smart Growth Acceleration Program*. This new funding will enable DOS to work with more municipalities on planning, zoning, and predevelopment projects that will ultimately reduce greenhouse gas emissions through enhanced smart growth land use practices. Smart growth promotes compact, mixed-use, multimodal community development, while also serving as a model for other states looking to support such emissions-reducing development patterns. To implement this proposed program, DOS will conduct a competitive application process for applicants, contract with awardees, assist municipalities with the implementation of the awarded project, track and report on program deliverables, and synthesize program data to evaluate impact, including greenhouse gas emissions reductions and other social, economic, and environmental co-benefits. With our sub-award, DOS will also procure and oversee a support contractor to assess the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the awarded activities over a multiyear horizon. Throughout this process, DOS will coordinate with NYSERDA on shared opportunities to promote greenhouse gas emissions reductions through smart growth activities and report on all progress and results from this program to NYSERDA.

As New York's designated state planning agency, DOS has substantial and demonstrated experience managing programs that facilitate development consistent with smart growth land use patterns that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, primarily through our Office of Planning,

Development, and Community Infrastructure. Our existing Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Program, as well as our downtown revitalization programs (Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward) and our Brownfield Opportunity Area planning program, facilitate land use and development practices that prioritize developing in ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by transforming participating communities into sustainable, vibrant centers that offer diverse services and amenities, jobs, economic opportunities, housing diversity, mixed-use development, and multimodal transportation. This will result in avoiding or minimizing the conversion of natural lands to development. These programs, as well as the activities submitted in this application, will further DOS' ability to positively influence how communities develop, thus driving down greenhouse gas emissions, particularly from transportation and buildings, which are two of New York's main sources of greenhouse gas emissions to-date, as well as providing an improved quality of life and co-benefits for New Yorkers.

Given DOS' long history of successful design and implementation of multiple programs on land use and community and economic development, DOS staff has substantial technical planning and zoning expertise related to smart growth land use patterns, strong, existing relationships with municipalities across the State, and a proven ability to manage projects and planning processes that lead to healthier and more sustainable communities. To note, DOS also employs a Smart Growth Director, who has been engaged in the smart growth movement, both voluntarily and professionally, for over 25 years and who will be engaged closely with the design and implementation of the *Smart Growth Acceleration Program*.

We look forward to the opportunity to implement this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Rodriguez", with a stylized, flowing script.

Robert J. Rodriguez
New York State Secretary of State