



# The Country and the Grassroots:

Rural action for local control of energy policy and development

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[www.morrisville.edu/sts](http://www.morrisville.edu/sts)

A case study of rural activism over electric energy policy and implementation.

Relevant issues:

- ~ Disputed claims over energy development
- ~ Rural/urban regional uneven development
- ~ Federalism and state's rights
- ~ New media and rural activism networks

Rural social movements not often studied in U.S., though very well covered in developing regions.

# ACRONYM HELL

**N.Y.R.I.**

**P.S.C.**

**N.I.E.T.C.**

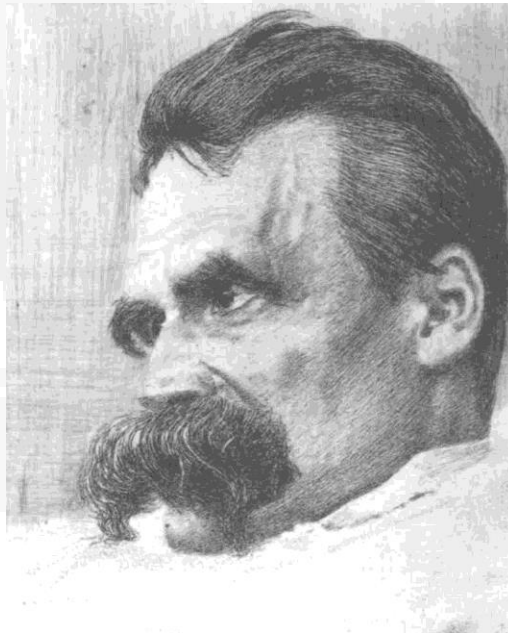
**N.Y.S.&W.**

**D.O.E.**

**N.I.E.T.Z.S.C.H.E.?**

**D.O.C.**

**F.E.R.C.**



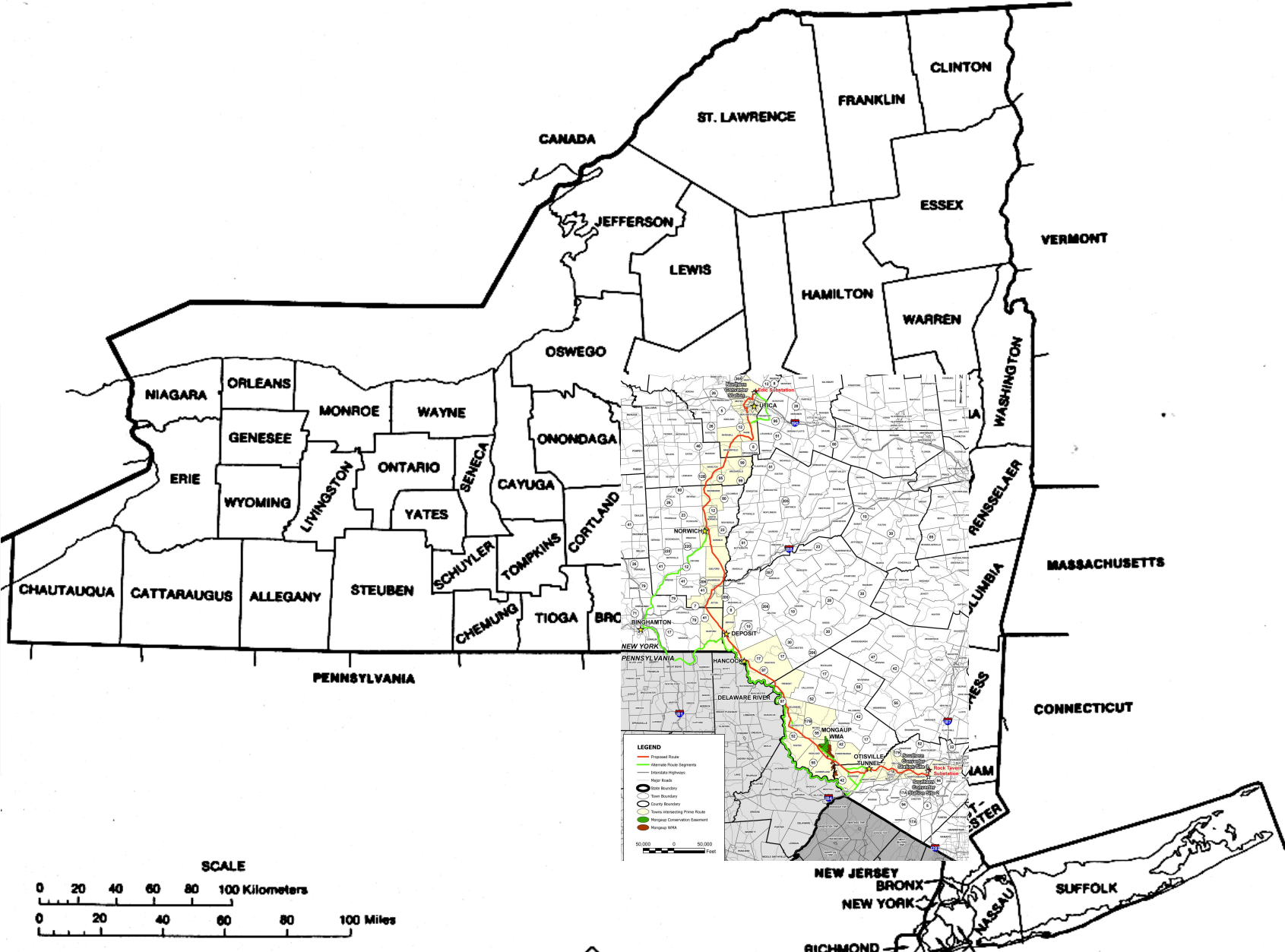
**C.A.R.I.**

**E.P.A.C.T**

**H.V.D.C.**

# Part I: The Grassroots and the Adversary

## The "Country": Rural Upstate New York



March 2006

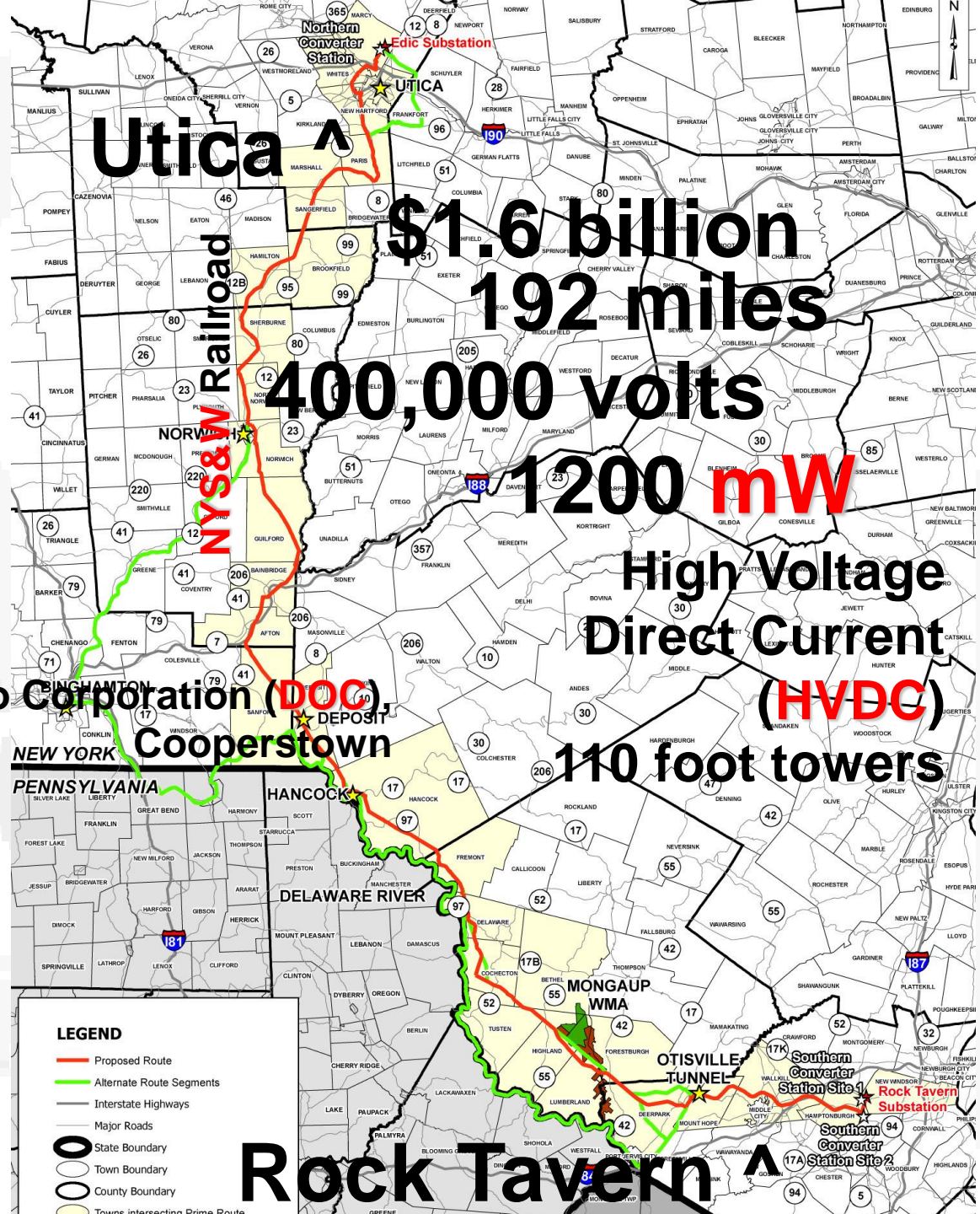
New

York

Regional

Interconnect

(NYRI)



Utica

\$1.6 billion  
192 miles

400,000 volts

1200 mW

High Voltage  
Direct Current

(HVDC)

110 foot towers

Delaware-Otsego Corporation (DOC)  
Cooperstown

Rock Tavern

- LEGEND**
- Proposed Route
  - Alternate Route Segments
  - Interstate Highways
  - Major Roads
  - State Boundary
  - Town Boundary
  - County Boundary
  - Towns intersecting Prime Route

## May 2006 : NYRI Public Meetings









## ***May 2006: Sociologist Gets Involved***

- 1) Scientific and philosophical arguments posed by the opposing forces;
- 2) The political process of engagement led by the opposing forces;
- 3) The use of the media, particularly the internet, as a tool for organizing widespread rural opposition.

A topographic map of the New York region, including parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The map shows terrain features like mountains and valleys, with a color gradient from green to brown. County boundaries are marked with thin lines. The title text is overlaid in the center of the map.

# THE NEW YORK REGIONAL INTERCONNECTION PROJECT

SKIP INTRO



## Welcome to New York Regional Interconnection

### Project Overview

The NYRI Project proposes to play a leading role in advancing the interests of all New Yorkers by facilitating greater efficiency and optimization of existing electric system infrastructure, thereby lowering prices, increasing electric system reliability and providing sustainable improvements in air quality.



New York Regional Interconnect, Inc. (NYRI) is a group of investors, engineers, legal advisors, economists and environmental scientists proposing to build a transmission line that would bring electrical power from areas with abundant supply to areas with high demand. NYRI is working with state leaders and communities to enhance public understanding of energy issues, support conservation and promote responsible energy production, transmission and use.

NYRI is owned by a consortium of investors with broad experience in managing energy and other infrastructure assets and investments. The consortium includes Borealis Infrastructure Management, a subsidiary of one of Canada's largest pension plans, and American Consumer Industries (ACI), an investment holding company that specializes in environmentally sensitive power generation technologies and applications.

### Company Profile

### Article VII Application

### Media Reports

### Frequently Asked Questions

[INQUIRIES](#)[DOWNLOADS](#)[REGISTER](#)

*Connecting With the Future*

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# NYRI and the “Grassroots”: Battling it Out Online


NYRI.info - Resources for Residents - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address <C:\WebWork\nyri\devo\old.html\oldsite-moville\nyri\index2.htm>


File Edit View Favorites Tools >> Links [WV](#) [NFX](#) [AMZ](#) [BNK](#) [TV](#) [DIC](#) [NYRI](#) [MOV](#) [SOC](#) [WFF](#) [MAP](#) [NPR](#) [NYT](#) [CHR](#)



## NY RESISTS INTERCONNECTION



**INFORMATION** **PRESS COVERAGE** **MAPS/PHOTOS** **ACTION** **PETITION** **MESSAGE BOARD**



**NY RESISTS INTERCONNECTION** is a committed group of active citizens, landowners, business people, environmentalists, and others who oppose the power project planned for the central New York region by NY Regional Interconnection. The aim of the website is to provide accurate and objective information about the project and to provide an opposing point of view to that of the private, anonymous investors in the project. Please join our efforts by contacting your legislators and signing our petition.

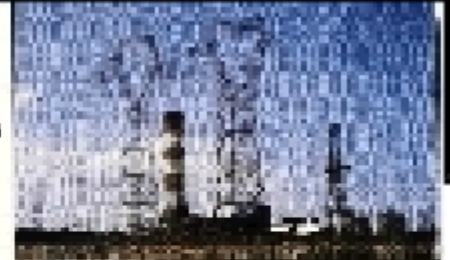
A groundswell of resistance is growing in CNY against this project which provides no recognizable benefit to the region, an area already beset by economic strife and whose chief valuable resource may be nature itself. NYRI threatens that resource.

EDUCATE ~ AGITATE ~ ORGANIZE

[email the webmaster](#)

# Power line project cuts through Chenango County

The Evening Sun  
MAY 4, 2008



Electric lines for the proposed project would cut through Chenango County, and would be in place by spring of 2008.

By STEVE BRANT  
Staff Writer

The project would be a 100-mile-long, 500-kV transmission line that would connect the Chenango County area to the New York State power grid.

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The Evening Sun  
MAY 4, 2008

## THE EVENING SUN

### Local leaders meet with power line company

Local leaders met with representatives of the power line company to discuss the proposed project and its impact on the community.

## The Mid-York Weekly

### Proposed Power Line Would Cut Through Madison County

The proposed power line project would cut through Madison County, raising concerns among local residents and officials.

**Skip Intro ▶**

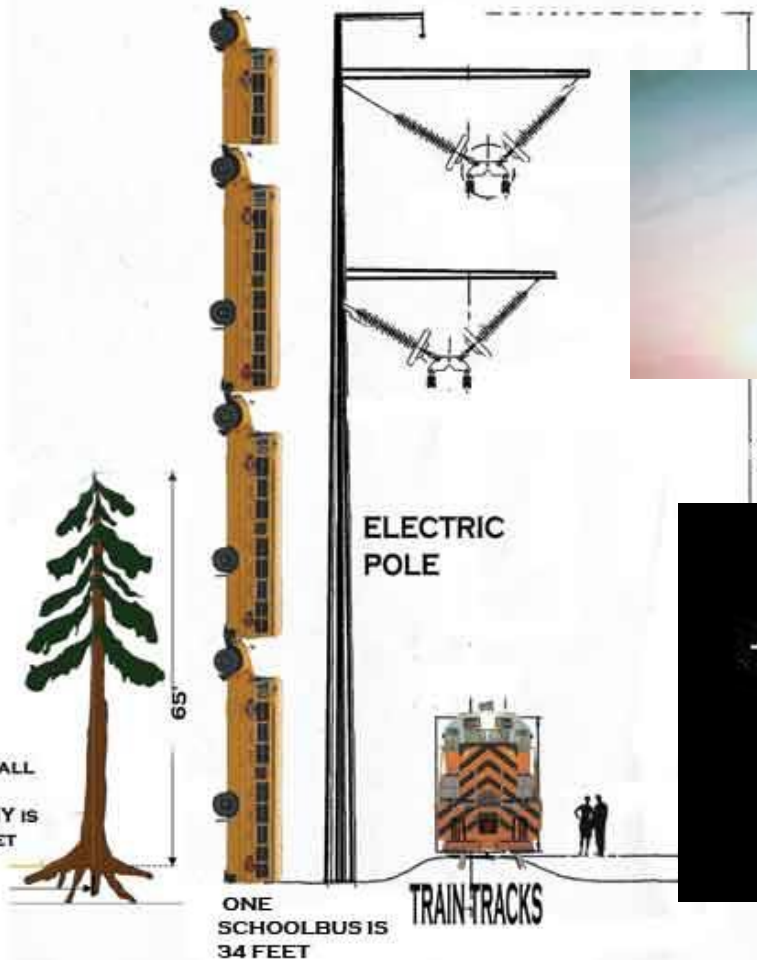
# The “Grassroots”: Upstate NY Citizen’s Groups *June 2006*



JUST  
HOW TALL IS 110' F  
ANYWAY? **STOP NYRI**



**NYRI**  
POWERLINES



*400,000*  
**VOLTS**



# The “Grassroots”: Solidarity & Resource Mobilization





The “Grassroots”:  
Solidarity & Resource Mobilization

# CARI



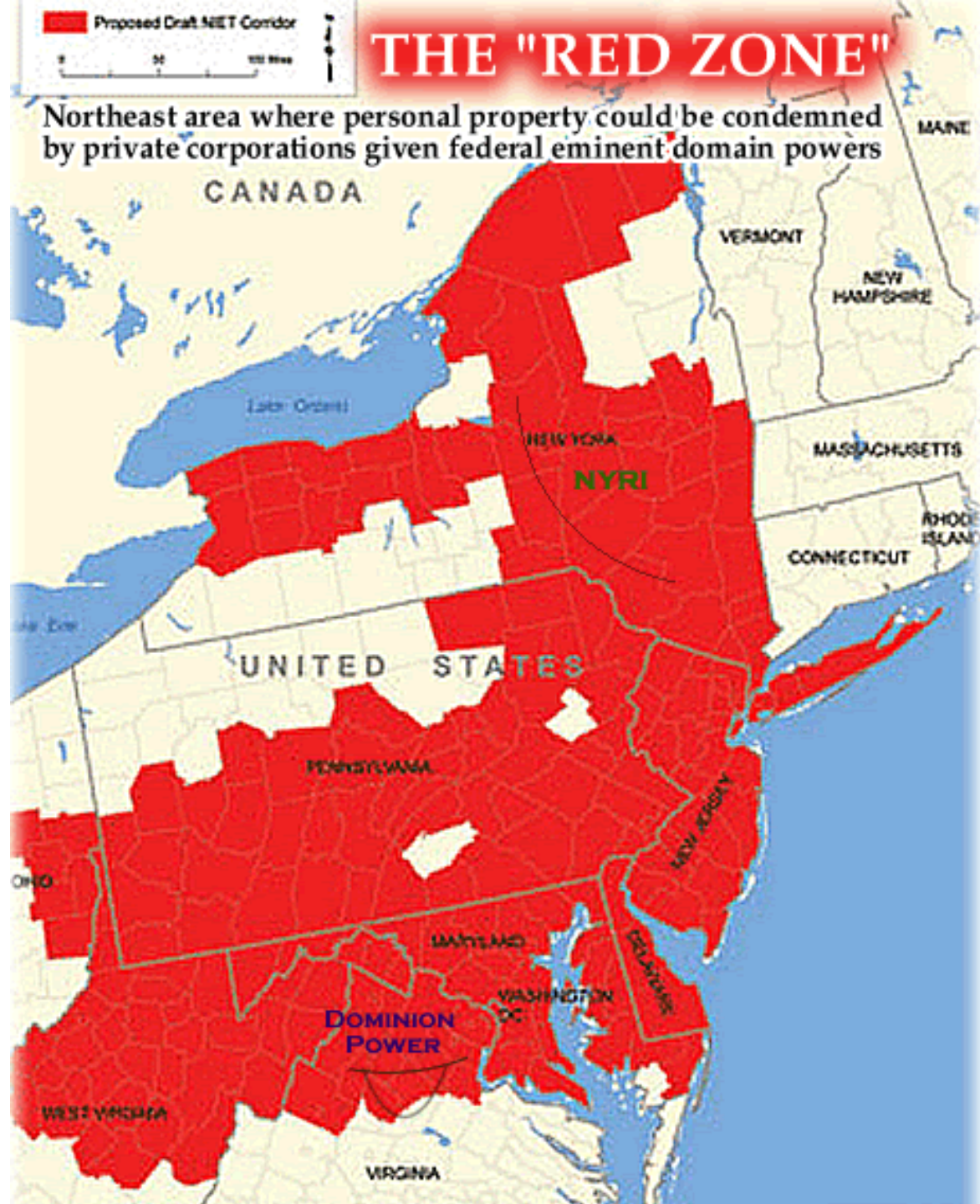
Communities Against Regional Interconnect

**Nearly \$1 million in funds secured to fight NYRI**

Proposed Draft NIET Corridor

# THE "RED ZONE"

Northeast area where personal property could be condemned by private corporations given federal eminent domain powers

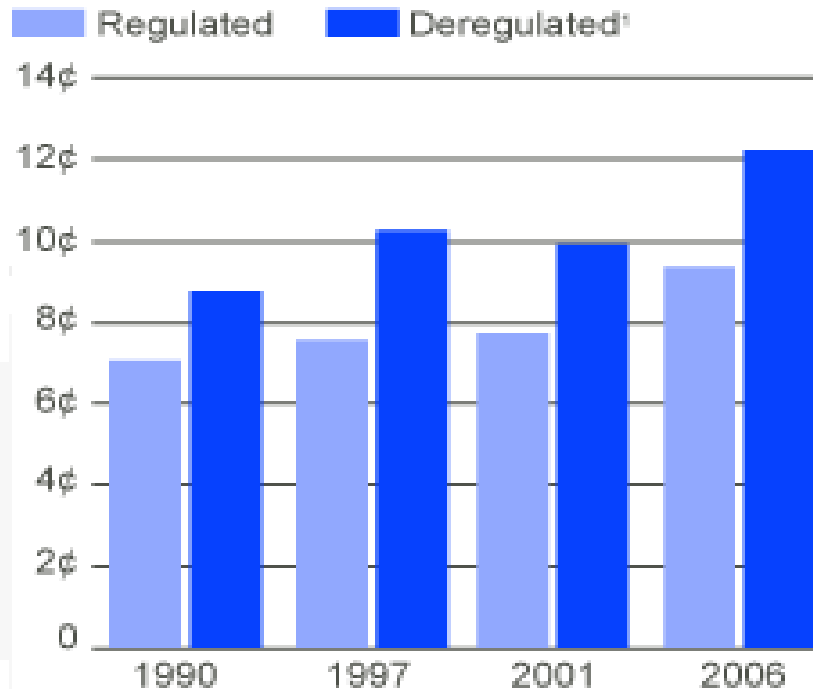


# NIETCs and NYRI: Deregulation and Privatization

## Imbalance of power

In 16 states, plus the District of Columbia, where electricity was deregulated, rates were 30 percent higher in 2006 than in other states. That gap grew from 24 percent in 1990.

Average electric rates (per kilowatt hour)



1 – Arizona, Connecticut, Washington, D.C., Delaware, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas.

Note: Data for each category calculated from statewide averages.

Source: AP analysis of Department of Energy data



# Part III – Policy, Politics, and Media

## The Politics of NYRI:

### Many Local & State Politicians Oppose NYRI



Dear Sam: NYRI is "incompetent," "arrogant," "bumbling," and "potentially devastating."  
~ Sherry B.

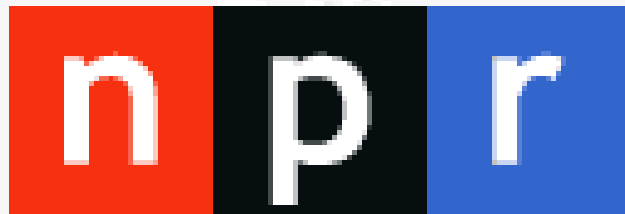
# The Media and NYRI:

Is there such a thing as bad publicity?



Reporting in the mass media transmits knowledge, but

also replicates errors made in the public understanding of technical and scientific issues.



# Socio-technical Issues with NYRI: What do the grassroots want?



Protection of Economic Rights



Protection of Public Health



Protection of Sociocultural Rights



Environmental Conservation



Historical Preservation



Development of Negotiated  
Energy Policy

# The Sociological Significance of NYRI

**Regional  
Development**

**Rural Internet  
Activism**



**STOP  
NYRI  
POWERLINES**

**[www.nyri.info](http://www.nyri.info)**

**Privatization  
& Deregulation**

**Federal vs.  
State Power**

**<http://sociology.morrisville.edu>**