



TO: Carmen D. Diaz, Acting Secretary of the Board

FROM: Katharina Miguel, Isles, Inc.

DATE: June 12, 2023

SUBJECT: In the Matter of the Clean Energy Programs and Budget for the Fiscal Year 2024 – Docket No. QO23040236

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Clean Energy Programs and Budget for the Fiscal Year 2024.

Isles, Inc. is a community development and environmental organization based in Trenton, NJ. For the past 40 years we have worked to foster self-reliant families and sustainable communities by providing services that directly address socioeconomic challenges in our capital city and other overburdened communities in the state.

We are excited to see that the BPU has dedicated \$7 million to funding E-Mobility Pilot programs in New Jersey. For the past four years our organization has collaborated with state and local leaders to develop GOTrenton!, one of the first community-based, subsidized, and fully electric transportation programs to serve low-income and environmental justice communities in the US. The project's goal is to bring affordable and reliable transportation to residents in order to improve access to better jobs, healthcare, nutritious food, and quality of life while addressing public health challenges by reducing air pollution.

It is imperative that existing pilot programs qualify for funding. The demonstration year of the project was funded by the Department of Environmental Protection in 2020 and will launch this summer. While we are thrilled to have been funded by the state for the first year, our greatest challenge is finding sustainable funding that will allow this program to be of service for Trenton residents for the following years. Through our years working on the ground, we know well how critical it is to be a dependable source of service for residents in order to build trust and acceptance into the community.

Funding existing pilot programs such as GOTrenton! will allow these projects to serve as models for future transportation programs during their development. This continued support is what will generate a better return of investment for the state by promoting economic and social growth directly in the communities the programs serve as well as newly developing programs that they can share knowledge and resources with. GOTrenton! specifically will provide insights on how to promote equitable transportation and the creation of new clean energy jobs in other parts of the state.

GOTrenton! and similar programs promote the state's Energy Master Plan's Strategy 6 to "support community energy planning and action with an emphasis on encouraging and supporting participation by low-income and moderate-income and environmental justice communities." In addition to allowing existing programs to qualify, we urge BPU to prioritize serving overburdened communities in the state when choosing programs for funding.

We are grateful to the BPU staff for funding E-Mobility programs in the state. By doing so we have the opportunity to revitalize neighborhoods, build wealth, and promote healthy living.