



***2021 Renewable Energy Forum: Role of Hydrogen***  
**Tuesday, November 9, 2021 | 10am-12pm**

### **Agenda**

- ❖ **10:00am: Introduction by Executive Director April McIver, Esq.**
- ❖ **10:05am: Presentation by Neil Skidell (Moderator)**
- ❖ **10:15am–10:40am: Speaker Presentations**
  - **Senator Kevin Parker**
  - **Gavin Donohue**
  - **Dr. Devinder Mahajan**
  - **Jennifer Kearney**
  - **Paul Schwartz**
- ❖ **10:40am: Moderated Panel Discussion**
- ❖ **11:30am: Audience Q/A**

## **Biographies of Presenters**

### **Neil Skidell, Managing Director, Par Plumbing**

Neil J. Slidell is the Managing Director, Green Solutions at The PAR Group. He leads the implementation of Compliance Services for the Par Group. He has been involved with gas safety in New York City, as part of an industry wide task force, for over 4 years. In addition, he leads the development and implementation of Carbon reduction strategies for commercial, life sciences, healthcare, and multi-family residential customers through the application of state-of-the-art HVAC and Plumbing technologies. He is an expert in the strategic use of technology to solve energy and water safety, conservation, generation and utilization challenges.

The PAR Group is New York's preeminent provider of plumbing, heating & air conditioning, fire protection and green solution services. Neil can be contacted at [nskidell@pargroup.com](mailto:nskidell@pargroup.com).

### **New York State Senator Kevin Parker, ( D, WF ) 21ST SENATE DISTRICT, Chairman of Committee on Energy and Telecommunications**

State Senator Kevin S. Parker is committed to restoring the overall quality of life for the constituents of the 21st Senatorial District in Brooklyn. A lifelong Brooklyn resident, Senator Parker has been a Flatbush resident for more than 31 years -- nurtured, educated, and employed in the borough. Senator Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of the 21st District, which consists of many diverse communities: Flatbush, East Flatbush, Flatlands, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope.

A product of the New York City Public School system, Senator Parker attended P.S. 193, Andries Hudde I.S. 240, and Midwood High School. Elected to the New York State Senate in 2002, Senator Parker's professional background reflects a wide range of public service and an unwavering commitment to a better New York. As the Special Assistant to former New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall, Senator Parker managed intergovernmental relations in New York City, and was the liaison between the Comptroller; city, state, and federal elected officials. Before taking office, Senator Parker was a New York City Urban Fellow and also served as Special Assistant to former Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger; Legislative Aide to former New York City Councilmember Una Clarke, and Special Assistant to Assemblyman Nick Perry. As Project Manager with the New York State Urban Development Corporation, Senator Parker financed minority and women owned businesses and promoted community business redevelopment.

Senator Parker worked on a wide range of issues within the financial service industry at UBS PaineWebber in the Chairman's office concerning Government Affairs. In his first term in office he was selected as a prestigious fellow for a program that trains emerging state legislators from across the 50 states. In addition to becoming a prestigious fellow, he was one of 40 emerging state leaders

from across the country to receive a Toll Fellowship from the Council of State Government. In 2005, he participated in intensive government course work with professionals of various fields from around the country at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

For the 2014/15 legislative term, his committee assignments include: Energy and Telecommunications; Finance; Rules; Banks; Insurance; Higher Education; Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation. He is currently the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, Former Majority Whip and First Vice Chair of the Association of Black, Puerto Rican & Asian Legislators. Senator Parker is also a member of the New American Task Force. Senator Parker has been appointed Parliamentarian to the NY State Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators, Incorporated, and was appointed as the Democratic lead of the Joint Budget Committee on Environment, Agriculture and Housing.

Senator Parker's commitment to his community is reflected in his leadership in civic organizations. He formed the New York Ready Emergency Preparedness Unit alongside other community leaders. He is the former 2nd Vice Chairman of the Board and chairperson of Community Board 17's Education Committee; a member of the Community Service Society's Associates program and the Children's Defense Fund's Community Crusade for Children. Senator Parker was a member of the Coro Foundation's Leadership New York XI class where he examined public policy, budget and infrastructure, race relations, education, and health care issues.

His commitment to education has taken him into the classroom as a professor of both African-American Studies and Political Science at several colleges, including: CUNYs: Baruch College, John Jay College, Medgar Evers College, City College; SUNY, Old Westbury; and Long Island University. Brooklyn College is where Senator Parker teaches a majority of his classes and is a faculty advisor to student organizations and activities. The Senator is currently an adjunct professor at Brooklyn College's Center for Worker Education. At Penn State (where he received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Service), Senator Parker organized students for racial justice and encouraged diversity at the University. He holds a Master's of Science Degree from the New School for Social Research in Urban Policy and Management and is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Political Science at The Graduate Center, CUNY. He is also a member of the Alpha Chapter of the Pi Eta Honor Society.

**Gavin Donohue, President & CEO of Independent Power Producers of NY, Inc. (IPPNY) & Appointee of NYS Climate Action Council**

Gavin J. Donohue is the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Independent Power Producers of New York, Inc. (IPPNY), a statewide trade association organized in 1986. IPPNY represents companies in the competitive power supply industry, including operators and developers of independent electric generating facilities, power marketers, and suppliers of goods and services to the industry.

Mr. Donohue is an appointed member of the New York State Climate Action Council, a 22-member body created in statute under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. The Council is charged with developing a plan to reach New York State's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals by 2050.

In 2001, Mr. Donohue joined IPPNY as the Executive Director and was appointed President and CEO of the association in May of 2003. While at IPPNY, Mr. Donohue has been a vocal proponent of improving New York energy policy and increasing competition in the state's energy markets. He has been active on a variety of issues before the New York Independent System Operator, the New York Public Service Commission and both state and federal legislatures.

Mr. Donohue brought a wealth of experience in energy and environmental policy issues as well as state and local government affairs to IPPNY. Before joining the association, he served as Executive Deputy Commissioner for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, where he managed daily operations of the 3,700-employee agency, as well as developed and coordinated the implementation of all major legislative and policy initiatives impacting the environment. Prior to that, he served as Assistant Secretary to Governor George E. Pataki and as Campaign Director for the successful 1996 \$1.75 billion Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act. In 1993, Mr. Donohue was elected to the Albany County Legislature, where he served for six years as Deputy Minority Leader. He also served as Chairman of the Albany Convention Center Authority, overseeing the construction of the \$80 million Albany Capital Center.

Mr. Donohue is an alumnus of Siena College in Loudonville, New York, and attended the State University of New York Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, and Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

**Devinder Mahajan, Professor and Graduate Program Director (CME) at Advanced Energy Center, Stony Brook University**

Dr. Devinder Mahajan is Professor and Graduate Program Director of Chemical & Molecular Engineering and serves as Director of the newly established Institute of Gas Innovation and Technology (I-GIT) in the R&D Park, Stony Brook University. His research includes monitoring energy policies and development of low-carbon technologies to address sustainability and climate change issues. He has published over 300 papers, delivered over 110 lectures, edited 8 special journal volumes, and holds 15 patents. Dr. Mahajan's awards include: New Energy Development Organization (NEDO) Fellow, Japan (1997); 1997 Annual Energy Conservation Center (ECC) Lecture on "Catalysis and Environment", Japan; Keynote speaker, International Oil Consortium Meeting, Milan, Italy (1999); Outstanding Mentor Award, Office of Science, United States Department of Energy (2008, 2010); University Visiting Professor, Government of Italy Fellowship, Università di Roma "La Sapienza", Roma, Italy (2008); Visiting Researcher, Institute for Global Strategies (IGES), Hayama, Japan (2009); Fulbright Specialist Scholar (Thailand, 2010; Kenya 2014); Certificate of Recognition, Bureau of Energy Resources, U.S. Department of State (2012); Marie Curie Senior Researcher (2013-16) under the nine-country consortium led by UPM, Madrid and funded by the European Commission; Participant, Expert Group Meeting- Science & Sustainable Goals- Reports to 30-Member Countries Open Working Group (Rio+20) of the General Assembly, United Nations (2013); Innovation Achievement Award, Brookhaven National Laboratory, New York (2014); Invitee, Opening Ceremony. International Year of Light- A UN Initiative. UNESCO, Paris, France; High-End Foreign Expert, Energy & Environment, Tongji University, China (2015- 2017). He was inducted to the National Academy of Inventors- Stony Brook University as a member in 2018.

Recently, the I-GIT is focusing on CH<sub>4</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> management. Our recently funded projects include repurposing natural gas pipelines for green hydrogen and harvesting renewable methane from local sources. We are integrating both initiatives under the Power-to-Products (P2X) with focus on developing modular processes for GREEN H<sub>2</sub> and its derivatives CH<sub>4</sub>, CH<sub>3</sub>OH and NH<sub>3</sub>, all liquid or gaseous H<sub>2</sub> carriers for applications to decarbonize power, transportation and marine sectors. Collectively, these molecules would help achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and reshape the \$1.5 trillion global economy. For more information, visit the webpage at: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/gas-innovation/>.

Dr. Mahajan received his B.Sc. (Honors School) and M.Sc. (Honors School) from Panjab University, Chandigarh; Ph. D. from the University of British Columbia, Canada in Chemistry and completed his post-doctoral training at Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL), New York. He joined the staff of BNL in 1983 and moved to Stony Brook University in 2002 and concurrently held a joint Scientific staff appointment with BNL till 2015. For more information, visit the webpage at:

[https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/matscieng/people/\\_core/devinder\\_mahajan.php](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/matscieng/people/_core/devinder_mahajan.php)  
<https://www.stonybrook.edu/gas-innovation/>

### **Jennifer Kearney, Executive Partner of Gotham360**

Before forming Gotham 360, Jennifer served as the Director of Energy Programs for NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, the largest not-for-profit, non-sectarian hospital in the United States. In that role, Jennifer managed a \$70 million energy procurement portfolio including power, renewables, natural gas, and fuel oil. In addition to procurement of supply, Jennifer oversaw the development and construction of an 8MW synchronous cogeneration system, which was the first of its kind in the borough of Manhattan. Her efforts resulted in savings of over \$11 million annually, and ongoing national recognition by the EPA as an ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year.

Leveraging her expertise in the healthcare space, Jennifer founded Gotham 360 to support other healthcare organizations with strategies for the development and deployment of energy programs based on combining established best practices with innovation in the implementation of new technologies. Clients from the higher education, industrial, multi-family, and commercial sectors soon followed, and today, Gotham 360 is recognized as a groundbreaking, woman-owned business addressing complex challenges in energy management, efficiency, resiliency, and sustainability.

Jennifer has both authored and been the subject of several articles published in national energy journals including Cogeneration & Onsite Power Production, Breakthrough, and Healthcare Facilities Management. She sits on the Advisory Board of Enterprising Women magazine and is committed to the empowerment of women globally in both her professional and personal life.

### **Paul Schwartz , Co-Founder & Director, ThermoLift**

Paul Schwartz has extensive experience securing early-stage funding for technology startups and building technology teams capable of developing and commercializing new products. Mr. Schwartz has previously worked with early-stage tech firms including Advanced Propulsion Technologies and EcoMotors, where he helped land investments from Bill Gates and Vinod Khosla. ThermoLift's CEO from its 2012 founding to 2019, he continues to lead the company's utility collaborations and other key strategic partnerships.