Solar Power for East River State Park

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by Jeff Mann

L-R Assemblyman Joe Lentol, Tara DePorte, Councilmember Steve Levin and Green Mountain Energy's Casey Schepp COURTESY HII / LEANNE HARVEY

North Brooklyn will take a step towards energy efficiency courtesy of donated solar equipment by the Human Impacts Institute (HII). The organization, which places responsibility for the environment on people and communities, made the announcement at East River State Park (ERSP) on Sunday, November 18th. Assemblyman Joe Lentol and Councilmember Steve Levin were on hand for the presentation and to discuss local impacts of climate change and disaster preparedness.

The donated solar equipment comes as a result of the HII winning Green Mountain Energy's Vote Solar for Good challenge. The group also issued an open invitation to residents, on Sunday, to join their NYC Climate Coalition, which focuses on climate action and awareness.

"In the past weeks, we have seen the devastating vulnerability of our community to a changing climate," said Tara DePorte, Founder and Executive Director of the HII. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, they are encouraging New Yorkers to address climate change "head-on, through direct action, education and community organizing."

"The Human Impacts Institute's new New York City Climate Coalition is leading the way in climate change education and awareness," said Lentol, an HII community partner. "The solar generator will undoubtedly have a positive effect on educating residents of North Brooklyn, both young and old, about climate change."

The generator will be housed at the park and will provide clean energy for HII eco-workshops and events. The park also lends itself to other community programs the organization is developing, such as composting, rainwater harvesting and native species gardening. Its proximity to the river serves as a constant reminder of the waterfront's lack of environmental buffers to natural disasters.