

## *Going Green New York*

### **Discussion Questions**

1. New York City's Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) spent \$200,000 million on its partially solar-powered Stillwell Avenue subway station. Many object that such spending can't be justified in the midst of a recession in which so many other essential civic services are suffering budget cutbacks. Others feel that energy efficiency and environmental sustainability needs to be made a civic priority no matter how much it cost upfront. What do you think?
2. Despite the clean renewable energy they generate, wind turbines like those in upstate New York are not universally welcomed. Many locals object to what they claim is the intrusive appearance, distracting shadows, and irritating noise of the turbines. Do you think the larger good of clean wind energy should outweigh the objections—and perhaps even property rights—of those who have to live next to the turbines?
3. Considering the already sky-high prices of New York real estate, do you think that green construction methods—which can increase the cost of a residential building by 33%—are a necessity or a luxury?
4. Locally-produced food is gaining popularity as both a healthy and an environmentally sustainable way to eat. What food is grown or raised in your area?
5. Many people think the government should regulate automobile fuel economy in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while others feel that it should be a matter of personal choice. What do you think?
6. Sustainability proponents often point to the number of new jobs that green technologies and policies would create. What do you think some of those jobs might be?
7. Maury Rubin—proprietor of the four bakeries profiled in *Going Green New York*—insists that his businesses are not designed to seek “world domination,” but rather to “grow up in a scalable...and sustainable way.” What do you think he means by this? Do you think big business can be sustainable as well? Why or why not?
8. What are some of the ways in which your own community is or could be increasing its environmental sustainability? What are the challenges to doing so?