

**Statement on the Draft Comprehensive Energy Strategy
from the Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs
November 28, 2012**

We are participants in a statewide roundtable on climate and jobs that includes labor unions, community organizations, religious groups, businesses and environmental groups. We are deeply concerned about the need to build a sustainable economy with good-paying jobs here at home while reducing the threat of climate disruption here and around the world. We believe that policies like the DEEP "2012 Comprehensive Energy Strategy for Connecticut" present an important opportunity to address both the economic crisis and the climate crisis.

We reject the false choice of "jobs or the environment." We know that environmental change is coming and will require changes in how we produce and consume both energy and goods and services. We seek to build a worker-oriented environmental movement that supports a fair and just transition program to protect not only the environment, but also the livelihoods of working people endangered by both climate change and the steps taken toward mitigation and adaptation. Workers making the difficult transition to alternative work deserve well-paid, secure jobs with benefits and the right to union representation.

We strongly support the Draft Strategy's emphasis on energy efficiency as the least-cost way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Energy efficiency programs also create large numbers of local jobs which cannot be outsourced. We urge an immediate increase in funding to these programs, and we support the expansion of innovative financing tools, including on-bill payment.

We applaud the Draft Strategy's proposal to study "raising the target" for the State's renewable portfolio standards beyond the current commitment to 20% by 2020, but we oppose reclassifying large-scale Canadian hydropower and waste-to-energy projects as Class I renewables. Such a move will produce no new jobs in the state, and it will reduce incentives to expand regional wind energy production, in-state solar and fuel cell development, as well as local recycling programs. We need to invest our energy dollars in ways that promote local and regional economic activity.

We have concerns about the proposed \$5 billion investment in the expansion of natural gas infrastructure. Recognizing the amount of methane released during the extraction and transmission of natural gas, the DEEP needs to quantify the greenhouse gas pollution impact of the proposed natural gas expansion over the investment lifetime of the projects and compare that impact with alternative investments. Similarly, while the Draft Strategy states that building natural gas infrastructure will create "as many as 7,000 jobs," such predictions have often proved to be exaggerated and must be measured against the far higher number of jobs per dollar usually resulting from investments in renewable energy and conservation.

While natural gas may have a role to play in the transition to clean energy, Connecticut should exercise caution in making infrastructure investments that lock us into natural gas for decades to come. Investments in expanded natural gas infrastructure should be explicitly linked to energy efficiency retrofits, thereby maximizing short-term return in energy savings and job creation, as well as yielding long-term savings that will continue beyond a future shift to renewable energy sources.

We commend the DEEP and the State of Connecticut for addressing the issue of climate change in the Draft Strategy. However, the document states that "additional measures" will be required "to achieve the goal of an 80% [greenhouse gas] emissions reduction by 2050 as spelled out in the State's Global Warming Solutions Act." We urge that the next draft of the Strategy include "additional measures" to achieve the goal required by the statute.

*The following people have endorsed this statement **as individuals** and NOT on behalf of or representing any organization or institution.*

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