

Statement from the Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs March 2013

We are participants in a statewide roundtable on climate and jobs that includes labor unions, community organizations, religious groups, the business community, and environmental organizations. 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 right now Connecticut faces 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 believe that the transition to a climate-safe Connecticut can help provide the basis for an economy with good jobs for all who need them. We know that in most cases renewable fuels and energy use reduction provide the greatest employment per dollar. We urge that all energy-related policy proposals include job impact statements based on a uniform method of evaluation.

Connecticut's Global Warming Solutions Act established the goal of an 80% greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2050. We believe that vision now needs to be translated into a concrete plan of action. We urge the General Assembly to take concrete steps to move rapidly toward that goal.

Energy Efficiency

We strongly support the emphasis on energy efficiency in the DEEP's Comprehensive Energy Strategy as the least-cost way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Energy efficiency programs also create large numbers of local jobs that cannot be outsourced.

We urge an immediate increase in funding to these programs. We support a stable funding source for oil energy efficiency (e.g. a surcharge on fuel oil), and we support the expansion of innovative financing tools, including on-bill payment and/or property tax bill payment, to implement all cost-effective efficiency measures. Financing should make possible a job-creating transition to climate-safe energy for people of all economic levels.

We urge the legislative and administrative steps necessary to ensure use of the Conservation Adjustment Mechanism to provide additional funding for energy efficiency. If increased fees cause any hardships for low-income consumers, they should be offset by rate or tax relief.

Renewable Portfolio Standards

We applaud the proposal, currently under study by the DEEP, to raise the target for the State's renewable portfolio standards beyond the current commitment to 20% by 2020.

We oppose reclassifying large-scale Canadian hydropower and waste-to-energy projects as Class I renewables. Such moves will produce no new jobs in the state, and they will reduce incentives to expand regional wind energy production, in-state solar and fuel cell development, as well as local recycling programs.

We support having Connecticut make a sustained commitment to renewable energy by signing long-term contracts for renewable energy generated in New England. We need to invest our energy dollars in ways that promote local and regional economic activity.

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

We urge Governor Malloy and the CT General Assembly to join with other participating states in approving and implementing the proposed dramatic reduction in regional CO2 emissions that emerged from the two-

year program review for the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. We agree with Commissioner Esty’s assessment that the changes “will allow us to continue moving toward a cleaner energy future in a manner that is consistent with the need to keep power cheap, strengthen our economy, and grow jobs.”

Connecticut Manufacturing for Climate Protection

We want investment in energy to create a market for Connecticut manufacturing, thereby creating Connecticut jobs. We encourage state economic development agencies to expand incentives and other forms of support for a growing renewable energy manufacturing sector that provides high-quality jobs. We also encourage exploration of other ways to promote the growth of climate-protecting industries, including local sourcing preferences and Connecticut content requirements.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is a fossil fuel which releases climate-destroying greenhouse gasses in its production, transmission, and use. Groups participating in the Roundtable have diverse perspectives on the potential role for natural gas as part of a transition to a low carbon-emissions economy, and we plan to organize a session for open dialogue later this year to allow us to learn from each other and seek further common ground. But we already share some common views about the proposed expansion of state’s natural gas infrastructure.

Where there are deteriorating and unsafe pipelines, replacement will likely be appropriate. However, investment in new natural gas infrastructure can lock Connecticut into natural gas dependence for decades, and such investment should be made with caution. Any expanded use of natural gas should be fully integrated with energy efficiency measures, thereby maximizing energy savings and job creation while promoting the transition to a low carbon-emissions economy.

Just Transition

It is a basic principle of fairness that the burden of policies that are necessary for society—like protecting public health and the environment—shouldn’t be borne by a small minority who happen to be victimized by their side effects. Protecting workers and communities from the effects of socially and environmentally necessary economic change is often referred to as a “just transition.”

We call for the inclusion of just transition policies as part of Connecticut’s transition to a climate-safe economy. We note that the law deregulating Connecticut’s electric distribution system included provisions related to “displaced worker protection costs” resulting from market restructuring. Provisions for severance, retraining, health care, job preference, and where appropriate early retirement for the workers who may be adversely affected by energy transition should be incorporated into our energy legislation.

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

NAME	TOWN	AFFILIATION (for identification purposes ONLY)
Norman Bender	East Lyme	Peoples Center
Todd Berch	Middletown	CT AFL-CIO
Blair Bertaccini	Waterbury	AFSCME Local 269
Lawrence Black	Bristol	Solar & Thermal Systems
Carmen Boudier	Bloomfield	
Sherman Bowens	Hartford	
Jeremy Brecher	Cornwall	Labor Network for Sustainability
Charles Button	Windsor	Central Connecticut State University
Doug Cahill	Glastonbury	Energy Services Company
Tom Carr	West Hartford	Interreligious Eco-Justice Network
Corinne Collins	Stafford Springs	CES

NAME	TOWN	AFFILIATION (for identification purposes ONLY)
Jill Cutler	West Cornwall	
Ivette Diana	Hartford	CT Coalition for Environmental Justice
William Dickerson	Hamden	CtT Fund for the Environment
Valentine Doyle	Hartford	CT Coalition for Environmental Justice
Anne Eglinton	Bloomfield	Hartford Monthly Meeting, Quakers
Marjorie Eickel	Bloomfield	Interreligious Eco-Justice Network
John Eickel	Bloomfield	Interreligious Eco-Justice Network
Teresa Eickel	Hartford	Interreligious Eco-Justice Network
Dan Fischer		CT Coalition for Environmental Justice
Virginia Gerena	Hartford	CT Coalition for Environmental Justice
Mike Gilluly	Old Lyme	Weatherization / Home Energy Auditor
Augusta Girard	Cheshire	Promoting Enduring peace
Jonathan Gorham	Woodbridge	Woodbridge Clean Energy Initiative Task Force
John Greeno	East Hampton	New England Conservation Services
Scott Guilmartin	Suffield	
Justin Haaheim	New Haven	Clean Water Action
Maureen Hart	Bloomfield	Sustainable Measures
Lee Hebert	Scotland	Mr.Electricity Energy Storage Systems L.L.C.
Win Heimer	West Hartford	CT Alliance for Retired Americans
John Humphries	Hartford	CT Roundtable on Climate & Jobs
Jerry Jarombek	Riverside	
Dianne Jones	Hartford	CT Coalition for Environmental Justice
Raquel Kennedy	New Britain	Vicotry Energy Solutions/HPACT
Diane Lauricella	Norwalk	First Congregational Church on the Green
Mark LeBel	New Haven	Connecticut Fund for the Environment
Kevin Lynch	West Hartford	CT Alliance for Retired Americans
Benjamin Martin	Wallingford	Wallingford Energy Conservation Commission & 350CT
Tim Maurer	Tolland	Global Institute For Transformation
John McCarthy	Sandy Hook	Danbury Central Labor Council
Allison McConnell	Danbury	
Jim Murkette		Union Energy Alliance
Marlene Newland	Hartford	CT Coalition for Environmental Justice
Tiana Ocasio- Nesmith	New Haven	IUOE Local 478
John Olsen	Clinton	CT AFL-CIO
Alessandra Pane	Fairfield	Sierra Club
Richard T. Parmlee, Sr.	Hartford	CT Coalition for Environmental Justice
Charles Redfern	Hebron	American Baptist Churches
Steve Schrag	Waterbury	Naugatuck Valley Project & ConnectiCOSH
Roseann Sholanich	Stratford	
Roger Smith	West Hartford	Clean Water Action
Anthony Sorge	Bethlehem	
Captain Dan Stahl	Northport	Outside North Shore Ltd
Jay Stewart		Unitarian Universalist Society: East
Kimberly Stoner	New Haven	
Bill Upholt	Hartford	IREJN & Hartford Advisory Commission on the Environment