

CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

MEDIA RELEASE

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ALL ABOARD!

**Senators Richard Blumenthal & Chris Murphy
join with CT Labor and Religious Leaders to Promote People's Climate March**

New Haven – On Tuesday, September 2, Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy joined the Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs to encourage participation in the upcoming [People's Climate March](#) in New York City and to announce a collaboration with Metro-North Railroad. A full-length video recording of the event is available at [CT-N](#).

The group gathered at Union Station in New Haven did not consist of “the usual suspects.” Some of the state's top labor leaders stood side-by-side with a diverse group of religious leaders and both of Connecticut's senators to announce the agreement with Metro-North Railroad to provide discount fares and enhanced capacity for people traveling from Connecticut to New York City on September 21.

Tickets are available at www.CTClimateTrain.org.

Lori Pelletier, Executive Secretary of the CT AFL-CIO introduced the thirteen Connecticut labor organizations that have endorsed the march and worked to secure the agreement with Metro-North.

“We stand here today to expose the false framing of ‘jobs vs. the environment’ and to tell a different story,” Pelletier told the group. “With Superstorm Sandy, Connecticut got a glimpse of what climate change holds in store for us. And we know that the lives and livelihoods of working families and the poor are hit hardest by such disasters. In fact, our workers face both an economic crisis and a climate crisis. The good news is that these two crises have a common solution – let's put people to work making our economy climate-safe.”

“Here at home, the CT AFL-CIO is proud to play a leading role in the CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs,” Pelletier continued. “And in New York City, our union members will march side by side with their neighbors, friends and family members for a future of good jobs, clean air, and healthy communities for all.”

With more than a dozen endorsing unions and labor organizations, Connecticut will have one of the strongest labor contingents at the march.

“Our union members -- particularly teachers and school support staff -- play a critical role in making sure their students understand that the climate crisis is real and requires action,” said **Melodie Peters, President of the American Federation of Teachers - Connecticut**. “We’re proud to support the People’s Climate March and to mobilize the working women and men we represent to be part of this important and historic effort.”

“Nationally,” Peters continued, “AFT has expressed support for the Next Generation Science Standards and is working toward effective curriculum development and implementation by partnering with environmental justice groups and activists to reclaim the promise of livable communities.”

The coalition gathered at Union Station to thank Metro-North for its collaboration in ensuring that large numbers of Connecticut residents can travel to New York City for the march. They also highlighted the important role of mass transit in a green jobs economy, providing good paying jobs for transit and construction workers, while providing climate-friendly access to jobs for all workers.

Senators Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal had helped advocate for the agreement with Metro-North and expressed support for the organizing being done to get Connecticut residents to participate in the upcoming march.

“Climate change is real and we are causing it,” **Senator Blumenthal** said. “We must act now to mitigate its devastating impacts, and to prevent future, escalating harm. I am proud to stand with the growing, diverse and vocal coalition of people calling for immediate action, and I applaud President Obama’s leadership in forging an international agreement to curb fossil fuel emissions. I am outraged and dismayed by Congress’ failure to act, and in the absence of responsible, bipartisan action, the federal government must continue to do what it can to protect our future generations.”

The Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs was launched in June 2012 with the support of Labor Network for Sustainability. The Roundtable is a partnership between the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network (IREJN) and the CT AFL-CIO to strengthen collaboration among Connecticut’s labor, environmental, and religious groups in advocating for public policies that address climate change while creating good-paying jobs in Connecticut.

Rabbi Joshua Hammerman of Temple Beth-El in Stamford, highlighted the important role of faith communities: “It is important for the religious community to stand as one in the face of the stark reality of climate change. As people enjoined by our Creator to be custodians of Creation, we must recall that we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”

CT State Council of Machinists President John Harrity serves on the Steering Committee for the CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs. “Here in Connecticut, Labor is working together with our allies in religious communities and environmental groups to build a sustainable, renewable energy future, creating jobs while protecting the climate,” said Harrity. “Climate change is the most important issue facing all of us for the rest of our lives. When our kids, and grandkids, ask ‘What did you do to help stop this disaster?’ which they will surely ask if we do not take drastic steps immediately – Machinists Union activists can say, ‘We helped save the world. We were there on September 21.’”

Participants in the press conference included:

- U.S. Senators Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal
- Lori Pelletier – Executive Secretary, CT AFL-CIO
- Melodie Peters – President, American Federation of Teachers - CT
- Rev. Dr. Ian Douglas – Bishop Diocesan, Episcopal Diocese of CT
- Rabbi Joshua Hammerman - Temple Beth El in Stamford
- Fatma Antar – Co-Founder, Islamic Association of Greater Hartford/Berlin Mosque;
Board Member, Interreligious Eco-Justice Network

These CT labor organizations have endorsed the march:

- CT AFL-CIO
- American Federation of Teachers – CT
- CT Education Association
- CT State Council SEIU
- CT State Council of Machinists
- CT State Employees Association SEIU Local 2001
- CT Alliance of Retired Americans
- Council 4 AFSCME
- Communication Workers of America - Local1298
- UNITE HERE CT
- United Auto Workers Region 9A
- United Electrical Workers - Local 243
- 32BJ SEIU CT

Launched in June 2012, the Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs is an innovative partnership between the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network (IREJN) and the CT AFL-CIO that seeks to strengthen collaboration among Connecticut’s labor, environmental, and religious groups in advocating for public policies that address urgent concerns about climate change while creating good-paying jobs right here in our state.

Additional Quotes from groups represented at the Press Conference

Rev. Thomas Carr, Pastor of Second Baptist Church of Suffield and co-founder of the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network: “Recognizing climate change as a moral issue means recognizing that all of us -- and especially people of faith -- have an *obligation* to act,” said Carr. Historically, faith communities have been instrumental in confronting moral outrages: slavery, apartheid, illiteracy, poverty, war. Today, we have a moral imperative to heal the planet while protecting the livelihoods of workers here in our own communities. IREJN is pleased to have the opportunity to stand – and march – alongside our allies in the labor movement.”

Sheila Cohen, President, and Jeff Leake, Vice President, of CT Education Association: “From Connecticut to California, we’ve all been experiencing the effects of what many experts are calling a climate crisis—from the historic brush fires out west to the flooding across the entire country to the coolest summer on record. It’s an issue that we must wrestle with and separate the wheat from the chaff. Now is the time to mobilize, march, and make history by raising your voice as good stewards for the environment. Working together—teachers, community members, businesses, and unions—we can bend the course of history to make sure we have a safe, sound, secure future, not just for ourselves, but for our children and our grandchildren for decades to come.”

Paul Filson, Director of the State Council of Service Employees International Union (SEIU): “The Service Employees International Union and its 65,000 Connecticut members are actively concerned about climate change. Building a new greener economy and creating good green jobs are SEIU priorities. And many of our members work with people who are the most vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change – the sick and the elderly. Our members will march on the 21st, and we will be demanding action to curtail climate change.”

Sal Luciano, Executive Director, Council 4 AFSCME: “Our union understands the dangers of global climate change and other environmental threats. Our members see the impact in their daily work as they help our communities respond and rebuild in the aftermath of extreme weather events. We welcome the opportunity to work in coalition with environmental, religious and community groups, along with our elected officials, so we can meet the challenge of protecting our fragile environment while strengthening the economy for working people.”

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