



CT Roundtable on Climate & Jobs



Comments Regarding **Scope of the 2016 Comprehensive Energy Strategy** June 14, 2016

We are participants in the statewide CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs, which 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 in CT while reducing the threat of climate disruption here and around the world. We believe that state policies like the Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES) present an important opportunity to address both the economic crisis and the climate crisis.

We reject the false choice of “jobs vs. the environment.” We seek to build a worker-oriented environmental movement organizing to secure a fair and just transition that protects not only the environment, but also the livelihoods of working families. A robust climate protection program will create tens of thousands of new jobs in CT, but the transition to a clean-energy economy will also displace some workers. Workers making the difficult transition to alternative work deserve well-paid, secure jobs with benefits and the right to union representation.

This year’s revision of the CES coincides with the development of a climate action strategy by the new Governor’s Council on Climate Change (GC3). The confluence of these two planning processes provides a unique opportunity to ensure explicit alignment of the state’s energy strategies with its mandated climate goals.

The first CES, issued in 2013, aimed to put the state “on a trajectory toward progress on climate change” but acknowledged that “significant additional measures and breakthrough technologies” would 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.” In revising the strategy document, **we urge CT DEEP to ensure that the new CES aligns with the GC3’s climate action strategy and does not rely on unspecified “additional measures” to achieve the reductions necessary to meet both the 2050 goal and interim targets set by the GC3.**

Toward that end, we believe the CES should incorporate the following components:

1. for each sector, evaluate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with and without the proposed strategies and address any gaps between projections and the mandated 2050 goal, as well as any interim targets set by the GC3;
2. for any sector that is not projected to achieve the targets, provide justification for not incorporating sufficient measures to do so;
3. a separate section of the report that tabulates all the emissions reductions from each sector and assesses whether the combination of strategies across all sectors puts us on track to achieve the overall 2050 goal and any interim targets;
4. since GHG emissions associated with the state’s current natural gas capacity already exceed the mandated emissions goal from all sources for 2050 (see Acadia Center’s “Comments on DEEP’s Proposed Energy Resource Procurement Under Public Act 15-107,” filed on 9/30/15), the CES should map out a path, with a series of steps, for reducing our reliance on natural gas by the year 2050;

5. an assessment of the technical and economic potential, as well as political feasibility, of all forms of in-state renewable energy resources (e.g., residential, commercial, community and utility-scale solar; and land-based and off-shore wind);
6. an assessment of the public health and safety impacts for each energy source and transportation measure included in the CES, possibly, as part of a more thorough cost/benefit analysis;
7. any project or program that relies on fossil fuels should be explicitly compared (in terms of overall cost/benefit) to the best possible non-fossil fuel alternative, including energy efficiency; and
8. if job creation estimates are included for any project or program that relies on fossil fuels, then a comparable job creation estimate must be provided for the best possible non-fossil fuel alternative, including energy efficiency.

We can achieve our climate goals through the rapid expansion of energy efficiency and renewable energy, combined with changes in consumption and behavior. Doing so will stimulate local economic development and job creation, but it will also require political resolve, steadfast leadership, and active public engagement.

We urge the CT DEEP to draft a Comprehensive Energy Strategy that provides a clear road map to a climate-safe future, and we pledge to work within our communities and institutions to build the momentum necessary to transform the vision into reality.

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

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