

Memo to the Next Governor of Connecticut

*Reaffirm and Advance Connecticut's
Commitment to Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

July 2010



Connecticut was an early leader in addressing climate change and has taken significant steps to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Doing so makes sense: as a coastal state, Connecticut is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of global warming such as rising sea levels, increased incidences of tick- and mosquito-borne diseases, higher energy costs and loss of distinctive and valuable features of our natural environment, including our agriculture and forests.

Connecticut has been a leader in tackling the challenge of global warming. Connecticut joined the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the first mandatory cap and trade system in the nation, which has served as a model for pending federal legislation. In 2003, at the direction of Gov. John Rowland, the state initiated one of the first, comprehensive state climate change dialogues, leading to enactment of a comprehensive law, the *Global Warming Solutions Act*, PA 08-98, that calls for a 10% reduction in global warming pollution from 1990 levels by 2020 and an 80% reduction by 2050 - the reductions scientists tell us are necessary to avoid the most threatening impacts of global warming.

In recent years the state's commitment to addressing climate change has faltered. To ensure Connecticut continues its progress, the next governor should build on Connecticut's long standing commitment to combating global warming by providing the leadership necessary to keep the State on course in meeting its goals and enforcing the law.

1. Participate in Ongoing Regional and Federal Actions. The new governor should take the lead by initiating a dialogue on improving and expanding the RGGI framework. RGGI is a success and has created millions of dollars in benefits for Connecticut consumers. To ensure its continued effectiveness, improvements are needed to: 1) ensure that the established cap accurately reflects current emission levels and decreases them over time; 2) work with the other RGGI states to include other major GHG emitting sectors in the RGGI construct; and 3) expand RGGI to include or link it to additional states and Canadian provinces. RGGI's success demonstrates that expansion would be a cost effective way to achieve further GHG reductions as required by PA 08-98. (See attached *RGGI 1 Year Evaluation*). At the same time, the next governor should vigorously advocate for the State's interests in any pending federal climate or energy legislation by actively working with our congressional delegation and other regional governors to ensure that 1) the State receives allowance value or oversight authority of utilities that allows for expand energy efficiency investments for all fuels and 2) preserves states' rights to further implement climate policy, allowing states like Connecticut to remain policy laboratories for the nation.

2. Implement High Value Steps to Reduce Emissions and Improve the Economy.

The next governor should expedite implementation of policies and actions that provide important near term and future emissions, economic and consumer benefits. Specifically, the next governor should:

- **Energy – Make Connecticut Cleaner and More Efficient.:** Energy efficiency is the single most important emissions reduction tool – and it is one that improves state gross product, builds jobs and reduces energy costs. Connecticut has solid efficiency policy on the books but implementation is languishing at state agencies and bogged down in bureaucratic red tape. The next governor should break the log jam by (i) requiring the state's electric and gas utilities to invest in all cost-effective effective energy efficiency as mandated by state law; (ii) requiring all state agencies responsible for

facilities management to conduct a comprehensive review of state building energy efficiency by December 2011, with a catalogue of all potential cost-effective efficiency upgrades including those incentivized by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund programs; (iii) ensure that the planned ARRA funded weatherization and energy upgrades to state-owned housing are contracted for and completed by the end of 2011; (iv) adopt the most advance building energy codes and appliance and equipment standards and make sure they are enforced. See ENE's detailed Memo to the Next Governor of Connecticut on this topic at: <http://env-ne.org/resources/open/p/id/1074>.

- **Transportation - Address our Overreliance on Gasoline by Requiring an Increase in Consumers' Fuel and Travel Choices.** Like all states, Connecticut is over-dependent on petroleum. Consumers deserve greater choice. The next governor should therefore ensure that a regional, market-based low carbon fuel standard (LCFS) is adopted for transportation fuels that will achieve a significant reduction in their average carbon content over the next decade, in accordance with the LCFS MOU signed by regional governors in December 2009. The transportation sector is the *largest source* of state greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and it is critical that we begin our transition to low carbon fuels such as electricity, natural gas, hydrogen, and advanced biofuels, and away from conventionally-made gasoline, high-carbon ethanol, and petroleum products derived from oil sands. Related strategies to reduce transportation emissions must include: 1) improving vehicle fuel economy; 2) reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT); and 3) providing better transportation choices between key commuting centers. While Connecticut can change the vehicle fuel efficiency standards regulated by the federal government, it can assure that state fleets and policies require or incent the use of the most efficient vehicles in any class. Similarly helping towns expand parking availability at transit stations and providing state employees incentives to use public transit would help increase ridership. However it will also be critical that these efforts are supported by initiatives that increase service on both Metro North and Shoreline East.
- **Communities, Land Use and Forests and Quality of Life:** Our forests help address climate change by absorbing and storing CO₂. Policies to protect open spaces also protect against carbon losses and improve forest health. Communities are grappling with the high cost of energy and infrastructure needed to support sprawling development. The choices we make now will determine the quality of life in our state in the future. Policies that assist towns to address greenhouse gas mitigation and planning will be vital for healthy, livable communities. Connecticut must be a leader in taking charge of its future quality of life and integrating climate impacts and benefits to its planning, infrastructure and land protection efforts.

3. Reinvigorate the Connecticut Climate Change Planning Process. Connecticut has demonstrated that diverse stakeholders can come together and unify around a common approach to addressing greenhouse gas emissions. The next governor must reinvigorate the Governor's Steering Committee on Climate Change and hold the member state agencies accountable for meeting the requirements established in the Global Warming Solutions Act and establish a regular public accounting of steps taken, their impact on achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and planned next steps, including projected emissions reductions.

Contact: Jessie Stratton, Director of Government Relations, jstratton@env-ne.org
21 Oak Street, Suite 202, Hartford, CT 06106 860-246-7121



8 Summer Street, PO Box 583 Rockport, ME 04856 (207) 236-6470 admin@env-ne.org
Rockport, ME / Boston, MA / Providence, RI / Hartford, CT /
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada / www.env-ne.org / Daniel L. Sosland, Executive Director

Environment Northeast is a nonprofit organization that researches and advocates innovative policies that tackle our environmental challenges while promoting sustainable economic development. ENE is at the forefront of state and regional efforts to combat global warming with solutions that promote clean energy, clean air and healthy forests.