



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing: February 26, 2008  
Energy and Technology Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Gina McCarthy  
Department of Environmental Protection

**Senate Bill No. 23, An Act Concerning Global Climate Change**

---

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Senate Bill No. 23. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) strongly supports the Governor's Global Climate Change Plan. Senate Bill 23 is multifaceted and innovative and would strengthen the Department's efforts to combat global warming.

The provisions of this bill would reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in a variety of ways. The first component would require all state agencies to incorporate measures to reduce their contributions to global warming into their strategic plans. Based on our experience with the Climate Change Action Plan, DEP would develop guidelines to assist our sister agencies in this effort. We support this as an excellent opportunity for us to lead by example in fighting global warming in Connecticut.

The Governor's proposal goes on to assist individual Connecticut homeowners in reducing their carbon footprints. Low cost loans for energy efficiency home improvements, authorized under section 16a-40b of the 2008 Supplement, would now be available for emerging technologies to specifically combat GHG emissions. These new technologies would join the energy conservation measures already in the statute, which reduce global warming through energy conservation. And because this bill would raise the qualifying income level to 200% of the median income, the assistance would become available to more Connecticut families. Helping to make these technologies more widely available enhances all of DEP's efforts to reduce GHG emissions in the state.

In the past year, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) has implemented a program to aggregate electricity loads and auction electricity contracts, which has resulted in an estimated savings to the state of \$11.5 million. The Governor's proposal anticipates that this process could be extended to benefit municipalities. To that end, S.B. 23 would provide technical assistance to municipalities, making OPM's experience with energy procurement available to local governments throughout the state. While the primary result of this provision would be to reduce cost, energy management should be a part of the comprehensive strategy to limit global warming.

Increasing the use of renewable energy sources such as solar power is an important element of our program to reduce global warming, as well as to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Senate Bill 23 would take the bold step of establishing a program to provide rebates for

residential solar power systems. Such a program could provide for a rebate of up to \$40,000. As we stated before, the DEP strongly supports any efforts to make technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions more widely available in Connecticut.

And not only does this bill encourage the use of alternative energy, it also promotes more efficient use of current energy resources by enhancing the program that provides rebates to homeowners replacing less energy efficient furnaces. This provision would have the Fuel Oil Conservation Board develop a program to implement Section 1 of the 2007 Energy Act for rebate of \$500 for purchase and installation of energy efficient heating units. Increasing energy efficiency is a key element in any program to reduce the pollution associated with energy production and use. As we have pointed out on many occasions, the cleanest energy source is the fuel that you don't have to burn.

One of the most innovative and forward-thinking elements of the Governor's Global Climate Change Plan is the establishment of a "greencollar jobs program" for students in the state's regional vocational-technical schools. If we are to increase the use of these alternative energy and energy efficient technologies, it is essential that we have the skilled workers to install and maintain them. This program needs to be implemented now so that we have the human resources available when we need them.

The final portion of this bill seeks to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and a variety of other pollutants and to promote fuel conservation by requiring bus operators to limit idling and by allowing state and local police to issue infractions for violations of the bus idling limitation. Idling vehicles produce carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas), and create emissions that contribute to the formation of smog and ground level ozone. Diesel exhaust also contains a number of toxic air pollutants and black carbon, or soot, which contributes to climate change. The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that diesel engines are the third largest source of fine particles. A number of recent studies have linked these particles with lung damage and the aggravation of heart and respiratory conditions including asthma and bronchitis.

The General Assembly has recognized the importance of this issue with respect to school buses, but the public health risk associated with diesel particulate emissions necessitates broader action to reduce excessive idling by all types of buses. Bus idling disproportionately impacts the urban residents who rely on buses for their transportation. Thus our effort to limit bus emissions is also an environmental justice issue. To this end, DEP supports supplementing its enforcement capabilities by authorizing local police authorities to ticket bus operators who idle excessively. DEP strongly believes this provision provides a cost-effective and efficient approach to improving air quality and immediately reduces the exposure of Connecticut residents to the potential health impacts of diesel exhaust. Furthermore, reducing diesel engine idling also saves the bus operators money by conserving fuel and reducing engine wear.

We strongly support Senate Bill No. 23 and thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on it. If you require any additional information, please contact Tom Tyler, the DEP legislative liaison at 424-3099 or Robert La France at 424-3401.