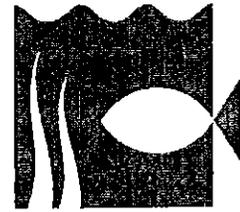


**Connecticut Fund  
for the Environment**



**Save the Sound**

**Appropriations Committee  
Public Hearing  
February 17 2009**

Submitted by: Charles J. Rothenberger, Staff Attorney

*Regarding:*

**The Governor's Biennium Budget Proposal 2010-2011;  
Department of Environmental Protection Funding; and  
The Council on Environmental Quality**

*Connecticut Fund for the Environment ("CFE") is a non-profit environmental organization with over 6,500 members statewide. For more than twenty-five years, CFE uses law, science and education to protect and preserve Connecticut's natural resources.*

**Governor's Biennium Budget Proposal.** Governor Rell's budget proposal would strip \$50 million from the Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy funds in 2010 and in 2011. This budget would take \$40 million from the Energy Conservation and Load Management Fund and \$10 million from the Renewable Energy Investment Fund. In addition, securitization would take another \$52 million per year for another 10 years.

These proposed reductions of the energy funds would severely impact some of their programs, and curtail the growth of the green energy industry in Connecticut.

For the following reasons, CFE urges you vote to reject these cuts and keep the energy funds intact:

- Cutting the energy efficiency and renewable energy funds is exactly the wrong approach in a financial crisis. We must continue to make wise policy decisions and investments if we are to build a better, sustainable place to live & work.
- Connecticut's energy funds are proven to save money for ratepayers, support business growth, and create jobs.
- The energy funds support at least 1,000 good jobs in Connecticut. If the programs lose funding, green businesses and these jobs may leave the state.
- The funds help pay for energy audits, solar panels, and efficiency measures for homes, businesses, municipalities.

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- In 2008, the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy ranked Connecticut's program the third-best in the nation. Connecticut is recognized as a leader in clean energy and efficiency, and we must continue to support these programs to maintain our competitive advantage.
- In the past decade, the efficiency fund served 45,000 households. Demand was so high – up 200% for residences and 300% for schools and businesses- in 2008 that the Renewable Energy program had to stop taking new applications.
- Improving efficiency is also the most cost-effective way to meet our greenhouse gas reduction mandates. The efficiency fund has saved 355 kilowatts in a year, which in terms of emissions is equivalent to preventing the burning of 164,000 lbs of coal, saving 101,000 acres of trees, or getting 48,865 cars off the road.
- This money is not state revenue: it comes from a surcharge on consumers' utility bills intended to support efficiency programs in the state.

**DEP Funding - We urge the Committee to hold the line on the current DEP budgets and not to allow any further cuts.** A fully functioning Department of Environmental Protection is necessary to maintain Connecticut as a high quality area to work, raise a family and/or locate a business. Our competitive advantage comes not from a race to the bottom in terms of environmental regulation, but a race to the top in terms of places for people and businesses to locate. An adequately funded DEP is an essential part of a vision for Connecticut's future.

The hits that DEP has taken in the current budget are substantial. Moreover, the Connecticut DEP has traditionally been radically underfunded by the state, thus any further cuts could decimate its ability to act. Accordingly, we strongly urge that this committee hold the line on the current budget and reject any additional cuts to this chronically underfunded agency.

**CEQ Independence - We urge the members of this Committee to keep the Council on Environmental Quality staff independent from DEP so it can continue to be most effective.** With a skeleton staff of two, CEQ gives Connecticut residents amazing value for each dollar spent. The agency independently monitors environmental indicators in its annual report, hears and responds to citizen complaints and identifies areas where the agency can operate better and more effectively to do its job. CEQ staff also publishes the Environmental Monitor and serves an important role under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act.

Because CEQ staff is already housed in the DEP for administrative purposes, combining the agencies will, in this case, have no budgetary or efficiency benefits. If CEQ staff is let go, that will simply mean that DEP will have to hire or dedicate an existing staff members to perform the duties they are currently performing. While the combination would serve no fiscal purpose, the lack of independence of the employees would severely undermine their ability to perform effectively. Thus, we urge the Committee to maintain the CEQ's independence.