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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps  
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Supporting House Bill 5435, An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Majority  
Leader's Job Growth Roundtable

Before the Connecticut General Assembly Commerce Committee  
Tuesday, March 9, 2010

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of Environment Connecticut, I am submitting this testimony supporting HB 5435. Environment Connecticut is a statewide, member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization. One of our top priorities in 2010 is promotion of policies to create and retain jobs in Connecticut's clean energy economy. We applaud the committee for considering this job-focused legislation and offer the following comments for your consideration. These proposals would support job growth in clean energy and other sectors promoting a clean, healthy environment. These ideas also directly meet many of the policy goals identified in the recent report of the Majority Leader's Job Growth Roundtable.

Clean Energy Jobs:

- Establish sustainable renewable energy incentive programs that move beyond limited direct subsidies in the form of grants and rebates. For example, HB 5362, AAC Renewable Energy establishes (in sections 3 and 4 of that bill) a market-based incentive program for development of over 300 megawatts of solar power in Connecticut. Such a mechanism would, at no cost to the state, support creation of over **1,200 new jobs** tied to the solar industry in Connecticut. (Job-creation estimate based upon analysis by the non-profit group Vote Solar using the National Renewable Energy Laboratories PV Jobs and Economic Impacts Model.)
- Authorize creation of bond-funded municipal clean energy and energy efficiency loan funds. Such a program, modeled on successful and innovative "Property Assessed Clean Energy" (PACE) initiatives in jurisdictions nationwide involves creation of revolving loan pools at the municipal and regional level. Such loan pools are funded through municipal bonding and used to offer low-interest loans to local homeowners and small businesses investing in clean energy systems and energy efficiency improvements.

Such programs provide the dual economic benefit of cutting energy bills for residential and business customers and promoting the creation and retention of local jobs in clean energy businesses.

- Create new “virtual net metering” programs allowing for community-based sharing of the benefits of solar, fuel cells, and other renewable energy generation systems between residents, businesses, houses of worship, and other customers within neighborhoods and municipalities. This allows consumers who otherwise would be unable to install renewable energy systems to gain benefits from such systems.

Agricultural Jobs:

- Establish a Farm Training & Infrastructure Match Program funded with a combined \$1.5 million in state bond funding and prioritizing programs eligible for federal matching funding. The program would provide grants supporting agriculture workforce training and capital investment benefiting Connecticut agricultural producers.

Transit-Oriented Jobs:

- Require the Department of Economic & Community Development and Connecticut Development Authority to prioritize granting of tax credits, business incentives, loans, etc., to businesses expanding operations and hiring employees at job sites located in proximity to existing bus and rail transit lines.

Clean Water Jobs:

- Enable municipalities to create stormwater authorities to fund measures to reduce stormwater pollution and meet Clean Water Act obligations.
- Support investment in sewage treatment plant and infrastructure upgrades. Such initiatives create and retain local jobs, reduce pollution flowing into the state’s waterways and Long Island Sound, and can leverage available federal funds.

We urge the legislature to support legislative proposals such as these that can stimulate growth of jobs in business sectors that benefit both the state’s environment and economy. Thank you again for the opportunity to offer this testimony and comments supporting House Bill 5435.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps  
Program Director  
Environment Connecticut

*Environment Connecticut is a non-profit, member-supported environmental advocacy organization working for clean air, clean water and open spaces.*

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