



CITIZENS FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
Corporate Responsibility Campaign

H.B. 5465 - An Act Concerning the Development of Green Jobs

My name is Karen Schuessler and I am the Director of Citizens for Economic Opportunity (CEO). CEO is a coalition of community and labor groups addressing health care reform and corporate responsibility.

I strongly support H.B. 5465 and support implementing the recommendations of the Green Jobs Working Group.

Green jobs are extremely important for the economy and the environment of Connecticut. Connecticut should be proud that it is the first state with a required green building code for public and private buildings. We have already received funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support training in new green building codes, solar energy technologies, weatherization etc.

Connecticut is already a leader for the rest of the nation. According to Management Information Services in Washington, D.C., Connecticut created approximately 165,000 green jobs in 2009. This represents 9% of total Connecticut jobs and 1.3% of total U.S. green jobs. This is a great starting point that we must continue to build on. One way to build on our success is to follow the recommendation in the legislation to develop a green jobs web site to disseminate information on green jobs technology and industry in the state which will enable individuals, and employers to better understand what training and skills are required.

The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund must be maintained. In early February when the Office of Policy and Management released its recommendations which included borrowing \$1.3 billion, it was disturbing that the Governor was considering diverting money from the green technology funds. It is short sighted to divert money from this fund especially in the state of Connecticut where we have one of the highest energy costs in the nation. Diverting a portion of everyone's electric bill to cover the state's budget deficit instead of investing in clean energy technology will cause energy costs to continue to skyrocket. It is better to reduce the cost of energy bills by investing in the creation of renewable energy which will save individuals and small businesses more money in the long run.

Another crucial recommendation that must be implemented is that the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee conduct a study to examine the benefits of establishing a state energy office to serve as a vehicle for federal funding and to develop an office to help organizations access state matching funds when applying for federal energy grants. It is important to maintain ongoing financing mechanisms so businesses and individuals can continue to upgrade to renewable and sustainable energy. When a market is created for green jobs it is essential that there be coordination among agencies to ensure the funding sources remain constant. Green jobs is not a project that can be funded

for a few years whereby people are trained and begin to make upgrades and then the money dries up and you are back to square one. There must be a constant flow of revenue to guarantee success.

Lastly, the Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE) must be established in our municipalities. This law allows local governments to help homeowners finance upgrades to their homes energy efficiency and is paid for by the homeowners property tax bill over a period of years. It makes green technology affordable to average middle-class homeowners and lowers utility bills. PACE lowers the cost of living, raises property values, creates jobs and helps the environment.

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