

As Energy Specialist for the Town of West Hartford, I would like to mention several key issues that directly affect projects our Town is working on. I would like to encourage the governor and legislators to improve the Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES) and take action on the following in Governor's Bill 6360:

1. Removing barriers to renewable energy installations. Virtual net metering can remove geographic barriers to siting renewable energy sources and turn brownfields, landfills and other non-productive properties into assets. Residential renewable energy installations are currently exempt from property taxes, and extending this to commercial renewable energy installations would make more systems economically viable. Allowing virtual net metering under third party power purchase agreements is also critical, as this is, usually, the only way municipalities can install PV.

The Town of West Hartford is currently pursuing several large solar projects, including one which may be able to provide enough power for all of the Town's electricity use.

2. Fully funding all cost - effective energy efficiency for all fuels. This is a critical way for Connecticut to reach its energy, economic and environmental goals, but right now our state has funding in place for only some of the energy efficiency to which it has committed. Establishing a stable funding source for oil energy efficiency (such as a surcharge on fuel oil) is a must.

A large portion of Town residents heat with oil. It is not fair that they do not have access to the same programs, rebates, and opportunities to improve their homes.

3. Improving our energy security and reliability by investing in micro - grids and distributed renewable generation - a crucial step for a state whose energy infrastructure has been repeatedly crippled by hurricanes and snowstorms in recent years. Connecticut needs to aggressively ramp up its \$15 million micro-grid pilot program and take concrete steps to invest in and enable systems that will keep us safe and on-line when disasters strike.

The Town was interested in the micro-grid pilot program but the aggressive timeline and regulatory issues (right of ways and utility billing) etc. were too much to overcome for the initial round of funding. The Town has an upcoming public/private project that might be viable candidate and would like to see this support continued.

4. Increase support for community - based outreach of energy programs. The most successful way to increase participation in residential efficiency programs is to support community members and organizations in grassroots outreach. State agencies should form partnerships with grassroots organizations to meet our efficiency goals on time and with community support.

Our Town, and many others, benefit immensely from assistance provided by many grassroots organizations like Clean Water Action and Inter-religious Eco-Justice Network. These players are key to getting word "out on the street" and projects actually installed which benefit everyone.

Thank you,

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