

House Republican Press Release

May 4, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Opinion: Toward A Sustainable Future



By Marilyn Giuliano

Efforts are underway both in the legislature and the Governor's office to create an environmental vision for Connecticut that is cleaner, greener and renewable.

These initiatives can be boiled down to one fundamental principle – environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability seeks to promote conservation, encourage innovation in energy efficiency technologies, and look toward energy diversification to address our long-term state needs.

As government develops environmental public policy, let me share some initiatives of note.

- That 20% of all energy sold and used in Connecticut come from clean or renewable resources, such as solar and geothermal energy;
- That as a state, we achieve a 20% reduction in peak electric consumption;
- That fossil fuel consumption be reduced;
- That all state and school construction projects incorporate energy efficiency technology;
- That residential and commercial heating oil sold and used in Connecticut contain a mandatory mix of 20% alternative fuels

During this legislative session, I have co-sponsored initiatives to apply green building standards to new state construction, and to extend the property tax exemption for solar energy electricity generating systems. I am particularly supportive of putting into place cost effective energy conservation measures.

One thing everyone can do to hold down electric bills and share the existing electricity supply is conservation. That includes improving home insulation, installing weather stripping, using more efficient appliances, and equipping lights with timers, photocells and motion-sensitive devices so they turn off when not needed.

Legislation now under consideration in the state Capitol will help stimulate a statewide habit of conservation, which is extremely important to addressing our state's impending electricity shortage. To encourage consumers to save energy, many colleagues and I propose to eliminate permanently the state sales tax on a wide range of weatherization products and energy-saving devices.

My colleagues and I have proposed grants to encourage more efficient residential heating and cooling systems. We want to restore funding to a conservation program that has been shortchanged in recent years when the state had a huge deficit, the Conservation and Load Management Fund. In addition, we want to expand the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program and Operation Fuel program to ensure the elderly and neediest residents have heat.

Also, we support the introduction of “green” construction standards in new taxpayer-funded state and local buildings. These national standards will help curtail energy use and save operating costs over the 40- or 50-year life of new buildings.

Conservation alone, however, cannot supply all the state’s future energy needs. Certainly, it can slow the growth in usage, but the state needs to increase the supply of clean, affordable energy for schools, homes, hospitals and businesses. The proposed legislation steps up the state’s efforts to develop more forms of renewable energy, such as solar and geothermal energy.

Electric distribution companies such as CL&P also need more flexibility to buy power through long-term contracts with generators. This may be an effective way of providing consumers with a consistent, predetermined price for our electricity.

As a state, our energy and environmental challenges are great. However, we must never underestimate the limitlessness of our resolve to work together to move each town, our state and this region of our country toward environmental conservation, innovation and sustainability.

If readers have questions on these or other state issues, please do not hesitate to contact me at 1-800-842-1423,

State Rep. Marilyn Giuliano, Republican leader on the legislature’s Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, is state representative from the 23rd Assembly District of Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook and Westbrook.