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Contact: Juliet Manalan  
CT Fund for the Environment  
203.787.0646 ext 128 / 860.841.5759

**Environmental Groups Pursue Economic Development Through Green Initiatives**  
*Release Blueprint for Moving Into a Green Economy*

**Hartford** – Eleven statewide environmental groups gathered in Hartford today to release a report to Governor Rell and lawmakers detailing critical areas of infrastructure investment that could substantially grow the state’s economy. *The Green Infrastructure Engine: Sustainable Development for Connecticut* makes recommendations in areas key to creating high-paying jobs and making Connecticut more attractive to a young, educated workforce while simultaneously protecting our environment and natural resources.

“In these difficult economic times it is imperative that our policymakers position the state to recover quickly from the downturn,” said Curt Johnson, Senior Staff Attorney and Program Director for Connecticut Fund for the Environment. “Connecticut is home to thousands of green energy sector jobs, so with the right investment and federal dollars, we can substantially grow those jobs and ensure the state maintains its leadership position in the new economy.”

“As Governor Rell and the legislature grapple with the worst economic crisis in generations, this report offers a blueprint for economic recovery,” said Environment Connecticut Program Director, Christopher Phelps. “Repowering Connecticut with clean energy, putting money back in the pockets of our families and businesses through energy efficiency, and protecting our future by stopping global warming will provide a solid foundation for building a better future for our state.”

For years the concept of growing the economy has been pitted against efforts to protect the environment. In reality, these two ideas work in tandem and residents across the state are realizing the profound positive impact that energy efficiency, conservation, and alternative transit have on our economy and quality of life. In Connecticut, for every dollar invested in energy efficiency, four dollars are saved by ratepayers -- plus an additional substantial economic benefit derived from keeping dollars in-state. The solar industry, fuel cell manufacturers and energy auditors support thousands of high-paying jobs and make the state less reliant upon conventional energy generation, thus reducing our dependence on fossil fuels.

“These green sector jobs are often filled by young people trained in Connecticut’s colleges and universities. A significant portion of the graduates of these institutions now leave the state to find employment. Supporting the types of jobs that keep them here strengthens Connecticut’s economy today and in the future,” said Jamie Howland, Policy Analyst for Environment Northeast.

“Today Connecticut has over two dozen in-state solar installation companies, but if we don’t create a solar strategy we won’t have any by this time next year,” said Roger Smith, Clean Water Action Campaign Director. “We need to follow the example of Massachusetts and New Jersey and require increasing amounts of solar electricity to bring the industry to a scale where it can compete with conventional generation based on price. We can bond for solar today and lock in part of the state government’s electric bill for decades to come.”

Energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, historic preservation, wildlife and natural resources, and Long Island Sound restoration are identified as areas key to Connecticut’s economic recovery. Areas that, with proper investment, can bring skilled jobs into the state, reduce energy costs, and protect the very landscapes that not only make Connecticut beautiful, but also provide a significant economic benefit.

“In Connecticut, wildlife-related recreation generates a surprising \$873 million in spending and supports 9,835 jobs. Yet, Connecticut businesses are telling us they are regularly lose out in the competition to attract young workers to states that are perceived as having more natural amenities than we do. Investing in natural resource conservation will help us ensure a healthy, attractive, and economically-viable state for people,” said Sandy Breslin, Director of Governmental Affairs for Audubon CT.

“Farming is the original ‘green job’; farmers harness solar energy and soil resources to produce high quality food and fiber for our state’s residents,” said Jiff Martin, Coalition Director of the Working Lands Alliance. “As a growing industry, our 5,000 farms pay taxes and provide nearly 20,000 jobs, adding vitality and character to our communities through farmers markets, farm stands, harvest festivals, seasonal pick-your-own businesses, and recreational tourism such as hiking, biking, and hunting.”

Authors of the sustainability blueprint include Audubon CT, Clean Water Action, Connecticut Fund for the Environment and its program Save the Sound, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Environment Connecticut, Environment Northeast, Face of Connecticut, Connecticut Forest and Park Association, The Nature Conservancy and Working Lands Alliance.

"Creating the same types of jobs we've always had will help in the short term, but creating green jobs will build a future for Connecticut in tomorrow's economy." remarked David Sutherland, Director of Government Relations for The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut.

***Find The Green Infrastructure Engine: Sustainable Development for Connecticut on [www.ctenvironment.org](http://www.ctenvironment.org), [www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org](http://www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org), and [www.ctclv.org](http://www.ctclv.org).***

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