

2022 Climate and Energy Legislative Priorities

Acadia Center • Citizens Campaign for the Environment • Clean Water Action • Connecticut Citizen Action Group • Connecticut Green Building Council • Connecticut League of Conservation Voters • Connecticut Passive House • Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs • Connecticut Solar and Storage • Connecticut Sustainable Business Council • Conservation Law Foundation • Eastern Connecticut Green Action • Efficiency for All • Environment Connecticut • EV Club of Connecticut • The Nature Conservancy • Northeast Clean Energy Council • Peoples Action for Clean Energy • Renew Northeast • Save the Sound • Sierra Club

Introduction:

The climate is changing^{1,2} and in Connecticut climate change impacts are far ranging^{3,4}. The primary cause of climate change is increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. To mitigate climate change, Connecticut has established several future emission reduction targets. However, based on the recent annual GHG emissions inventory⁵ Connecticut is not on track to achieve those targets.

We ask the General Assembly to seize on the opportunity this session to address our contributions to climate change and build a clean energy economy that benefits all Connecticut residents, while ensuring environmental justice is central in our climate and clean energy policy. This policy framework consists of five categories of legislative priorities developed by climate and energy NGOs (non-governmental organizations) in Connecticut:

1. Climate action and sector-wide emission targets

- Update the GWSA and emission targets
- Require consideration of climate impacts for agency action and mitigation for adverse impacts
- Clarify citizen suit enforcement ability
- Establish broad regulatory authority for state agencies to adopt regulations to address climate change
- Establish a 100% zero-carbon electricity supply commitment by 2040
- Consolidate DEEP procurement authority and programs

2. Transportation sector emission reduction

- Adopt California's medium and heavy-duty vehicle standards (Advanced Clean Trucks Rule)
- Authorize direct EV sales
- Require 100% ZEV sales by 2035
- Require Connecticut agencies to purchase and maintain a clean fleet

3. Building sector emission reduction

- Revise the Conservation and Load Management statute
- Enable municipalities to adopt a "stretch" building code
- Implement building energy labeling
- Set a target for air source heat pump deployment
- Revise the data center bill

4. Promotion of renewable and clean energy

- Create a battery storage strategy for replacement of fossil fuel peaker plants
- Expand solar program caps
- Establish incentives for buildout of solar canopies
- End fossil gas expansion policies

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>

² <https://science2017.globalchange.gov/>

³ <https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/climate-change-ct.pdf>

⁴ <https://circa.uconn.edu/ct-climate-science/>

⁵ https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GHG_Emissions_Inventory_2018.pdf

5. Diversity, equity, and inclusion in climate action

- Include environmental justice language from HB 6551 to address issues of air quality
- Engage and educate the public on climate change and climate impacts through state campaigns
- Create clean energy workforce training
- Require climate and energy education in public schools
- Establish accountability and metric practices on climate and energy funding allocations

By giving legislators a comprehensive list of issues as well as multiple potential solutions to address those issues, the hope is to provide support and guidance to legislators during this short 2022 legislative session. Under each of the five categories, there is a discussion of the issue, the proposed legislative solutions, and the points of contact for more information.

Legislative Priorities:

Climate Action and Sector-Wide Emission Targets

Issue: Connecticut's Global Warming Solutions Act⁶ (GWSA) passed in 2008, setting mandatory GHG reduction targets. The GWSA is the state's primary method to reduce GHG emissions for purposes of mitigating climate change. However, there is much that can be done to strengthen and make the GWSA more effective, while also giving broader authority to state agencies to enforce climate action. Outside of the GWSA, there are additional solutions that can help the state reduce emissions through accountability, enforcement, and consolidation.

Comprehensive GWSA package: The following solutions involving the GWSA are conceived to be part of a collective package that, taken together, will be a comprehensive and necessary approach towards statewide emission reductions. Each of the potential solutions listed below can stand on its own, but we should first look at this as a package.

Solutions:

- **Update the GWSA and emission targets**
 - When the GWSA was adopted, the 2020 target seemed modest and easily achievable. However, the most recent Connecticut [GHG Inventory](#) report indicates that our efforts to date have been insufficient to achieve it. As we continue to fall short of our emission reduction goals, the best available science tells us that a net-zero emissions target by 2050 is a critical and necessary target. While our neighboring states have updated their climate laws, adopting more stringent targets, establishing greater accountability, and providing a mechanism for enforcing the law, Connecticut remains stuck in the past. It is time for Connecticut to update its landmark climate law to reflect current science, circumstances and needs.
 - Points of Contact
 - Charles Rothenberger, Save the Sound, 203-787-0646, crothenberger@savethesound.org
 - Nathan Frohling, The Nature Conservancy, 203-980-5149, nfrohling@tnc.org
 - Samantha Dynowski, Sierra Club, 860-916-3639, samantha.dynowski@sierraclub.org
 - Shannon Laun, Conservation Law Foundation, 475-261-9538, slaun@clf.org
 - Sean Burke, Northeast Clean Energy Council, 978-846-0269 sburke@necec.org
 - Chris Phelps, Environment Connecticut, 860-836-9353, cphelps@environmentconnecticut.org
- **Require consideration of climate impacts for agency action and mitigation for adverse impacts**
 - In order to reach our emission reduction goals, we need a commitment to act comprehensively across government. State agencies and other administrative decision-making bodies must incorporate an evaluation of climate impacts in their decision-making. When an agency's actions result in increased emissions, such action must be accompanied by appropriate offsetting mitigation measures. New York,

⁶ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2008/ACT/PA/2008PA-00098-R00HB-05600-PA.htm>

Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont have already integrated this analysis into their administrative decision-making process.

- o Points of Contact
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 - Shannon Laun, Conservation Law Foundation, 475-261-9538, slaun@clf.org
 - Samantha Dynowski, Sierra Club, 860-916-3639, samantha.dynowski@sierraclub.org
 - Nathan Frohling, The Nature Conservancy, 203-980-5149, nfrohling@tnc.org
 - Amy McLean, Acadia Center, 860-246-7121, amclean@acadiacenter.org
- **Clarify citizen suit enforcement ability**
 - o Connecticut has a long history of recognizing the value of empowering citizens to ensure that the state meets its commitment to preserving the public trust in our land, air and natural resources. Since 1971, Connecticut’s Environmental Protection Act has authorized the citizens of this state to seek declaratory and equitable relief against the state and its agencies to protect the public trust in our natural resources from unreasonable pollution, impairment, or destruction. This authority means little if it is not clear that it includes the essential ability to enforce our landmark climate law as well. Meeting our climate obligations is fundamental to protecting our natural environment. Other states in the region such as Rhode Island and Vermont have explicitly provided the public with the right to enforce the provisions of their climate laws.
 - o Points of Contact
 - Charles Rothenberger, Save the Sound, 203-787-0646, crothenberger@savethesound.org
 - Shannon Laun, Conservation Law Foundation, 475-261-9538, slaun@clf.org
 - Chris Phelps, Environment Connecticut, 860-836-9353, cphelps@environmentconnecticut.org
- **Establish broad regulatory authority for state agencies to adopt regulations to address climate change**
 - o Within a framework of accountability and enforceability, administrative agencies must have the authority to act to meet the climate crisis. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) should have the authority to promulgate regulations and establish programs to mitigate climate emissions to ensure success in meeting our statutorily mandated GHG reduction obligations. While other Northeastern states have explicitly granted this authority to their agencies, it would also be appropriate in Connecticut where we have a legislative Regulation Review Committee to ensure that regulations meet statutory requirements.
 - o Points of Contact
 - Charles Rothenberger, Save the Sound, 203-787-0646, crothenberger@savethesound.org
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 - Chris Phelps, Environment Connecticut, 860-836-9353, cphelps@environmentconnecticut.org
- **Establish a 100% zero-carbon electricity supply commitment by 2040**
 - o Electrifying our economy across all sectors is recognized as fundamental to reaching climate goals. Although progress has been made including some State purchase of offshore wind, the pace and scale of needed movement to clean energy isn’t keeping up with climate imperatives. At minimum Connecticut needs a statutory commitment that its electric supply will be 100% zero-carbon by 2040. A zero-carbon commitment is key because it 1) remains in place across changing administrations, 2) serves as a legal and political basis for the programs, policy and funding needed to reach the target, 3) is a simple, clear message to all parties that Connecticut is committed to addressing climate including the business community where clarity and predictability is vital, 4) adds political momentum to the urgent need for reform of the regional electricity system overseen by ISO-NE and 5) is a basic foundational “first step” for enabling greater action needed on climate.
 - o Points of Contact
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 - Chris Phelps, Environment Connecticut, 860-836-9353, cphelps@environmentconnecticut.org
 - Sean Burke, Northeast Clean Energy Council, 978-846-0269, sburke@necec.org
- **Consolidate DEEP procurement authority and programs**
 - Since the creation of the GWSA, several laws have been adopted giving DEEP the discretion to procure clean energy resources. Such procurements were based on meeting GWSA and the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) emission and energy requirements, which have evolved over time. Additionally, DEEP's prioritization regarding procurement of certain fuel/energy types has also changed. Due to this continual evolution of priorities and viewpoints, as well as costs, there is a clear need to reexamine the discretionary nature of DEEP's procurement authority and the various programs established through energy and emissions goals.
 - Points of Contact
 - Francis Pullaro, RENEW Northeast, 646-734-8768, fpullaro@renew-ne.org
 - Nathan Frohling, The Nature Conservancy, 203-980-5149, nfrohling@tnc.org

Transportation Sector Emission Reduction

Issue: The 2018 Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) has shown that efforts targeting the transportation sector are essential to achieving a 45% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. In Connecticut, GHG emissions from the transportation sector account for over 38% of the state's emissions, and transportation emissions have remained static for the last 10 years. Enacting policies to reduce transportation emissions is critical for Connecticut to meet its future emission targets.

Solutions:

- **Adopt California's medium and heavy-duty vehicle standards (Advanced Clean Trucks Rule)**
 - Connecticut has pledged to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission electric vehicles (ZEVs) by signing on to the Multi-State ZEV MOU for light-duty⁷ and medium- and heavy-duty vehicles⁸ and in the state's EV Roadmap⁹. To aid in this transition, Connecticut should adopt California's Advanced Clean Trucks Rule, which requires an increasing percentage of new medium- and heavy-duty vehicles sold in the state to be ZEVs over time. Several states including New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts have already adopted the Rule.¹⁰ The Governor's recent Executive Order 21-23 calls for DEEP to assess whether California's medium- and heavy-duty vehicle standards are needed to meet Connecticut's air quality and climate targets, which is expected to underscore the need and value of this action.
 - Points of Contact
 - Shannon Laun, Conservation Law Foundation, 475-261-9538, slaun@clf.org
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 - Mark Scully, PACE, 917-843-7214, mwscully29@gmail.com
 - Charles Rothenberger, Save the Sound, 203-787-0646, crothenberger@savethesound.org

⁷ <https://www.nescaum.org/documents/zev-mou-10-governors-signed-20191120.pdf/>

⁸ <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/air/mobile/EVConnecticut/2020-07-14---Mulit-State-MHD-ZEV-MOU.pdf>

⁹

[http://www.dpuc.state.ct.us/DEEPEnergy.nsf/c6c6d525f7cdd1168525797d0047c5bf/f7ed4932eec438d0852585520001c81b/\\$FILE/EV%20Roadmap%20for%20Connecticut.pdf](http://www.dpuc.state.ct.us/DEEPEnergy.nsf/c6c6d525f7cdd1168525797d0047c5bf/f7ed4932eec438d0852585520001c81b/$FILE/EV%20Roadmap%20for%20Connecticut.pdf)

¹⁰ <https://www.electrictrucksnow.com/states>

- Nathan Frohling, The Nature Conservancy, 203-980-5149, nfrohling@tnc.org
- Chris Phelps, Environment Connecticut, 860-836-9353, cphelps@environmentconnecticut.org
- **Authorize direct EV sales**
 - Connecticut currently restricts all automotive manufacturers from selling directly in the state, even if they have never entered an agreement with franchise dealerships. To reach customers in Connecticut, most EV manufacturers must sell their vehicles online from one of their licensed retail locations outside the state, which creates logistics and paperwork challenges for EV customers in Connecticut. Current Connecticut law does not help franchised auto dealers by keeping competitive vehicles out of the state; it simply shifts jobs and investment to other states and creates unnecessary inconvenience and discouragement for Connecticut residents who want to purchase an EV.
 - Points of Contact
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 - Charles Rothenberger, Save the Sound, 203-787-0646, crothenberger@savethesound.org
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 - Nathan Frohling, The Nature Conservancy, 203-980-5149, nfrohling@tnc.org
 - Amy McLean, Acadia Center, 860-246-7121, amclean@acadiacenter.org
- **Require 100% ZEV sales by 2035**
 - ZEVs are essential to reduce pollution from the transportation sector. But the transition to clean vehicles is not happening fast enough. Connecticut should follow the lead of states like California and New York and formally adopt a target that 100% of new light-duty vehicles sold in-state will be ZEVs by 2035. California is developing Advanced Clean Cars II¹¹ regulations in support of these targets, and several states including Washington, Massachusetts, and Maine plan to adopt the California regulations when they are finalized. Connecticut should commit to adopting the California regulations in line with these states to reduce transportation pollution, improve public health, and meet Connecticut's GHG emissions reduction targets.
 - Points of Contact
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 - Chris Phelps, Environment Connecticut, 860-836-9353, cphelps@environmentconnecticut.org
- **Require Connecticut agencies to purchase and maintain a clean fleet**
 - Connecticut currently has over 3,500 vehicles in its fleet. While Connecticut Statute CGS 4a-67d¹² (modified by PA 04-231¹³) requires that cars and light-duty trucks purchased by the state must have an average EPA estimated fuel economy of at least 40 mpg, this is not enough. In 2019, Governor Lamont's Executive Order 1¹⁴ established a "Lead by Example" initiative that encouraged agencies to purchase "efficient" vehicles for its fleets, but it can be strengthened by passing legislation that mandates that state fleets must be 100% ZEVs by 2030. Government agencies around the country are transitioning their fleets and seeing the benefits of doing so, including major operational savings. Connecticut should follow suit.
 - Points of Contact
 - Samantha Dynowski, Sierra Club, 860-916-3639, samantha.dynowski@sierraclub.org

¹¹ <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/advanced-clean-cars-program>

¹² https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_058.htm#sec_4a-67d

¹³ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2004/act/pa/2004pa-00231-r00sb-00218-pa.htm>

¹⁴ <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-1.pdf>

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Building Sector Emission Reduction

Issue: In Connecticut, fossil fuel emissions from heating residential, industrial, and commercial buildings are over 15 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent, which represents 35% of overall state emissions.¹⁵ Buildings also consume more than 75% of the electric load for the state and emit about 6-7 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent. This sector represents a substantial portion of the state's annual emissions, and as such, policies targeting emissions reduction from this sector should be prioritized.

Solutions:

- **Revise the Conservation and Load Management statute PA 11-80 Section 33¹⁶ and PA 13-298 Section 16¹⁷**
 - Changes to this statute are needed in Connecticut to bring energy efficiency (EE) programs into alignment with climate laws. The proposed changes to these acts are based on existing law in Massachusetts. Priorities are: identify strategic electrification as an energy efficiency measure, tie in existing efficiency statutes with climate statutes, mandate that cost-effectiveness tests include social cost of CO₂, earmark funding for low-to-moderate income (LMI) outreach and engagement and introduce discounted electric rates for low-income ratepayers where they don't currently exist.
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 - Peter Millman, Eastern Connecticut Green Action, 860-933-2944, peter.millman7@gmail.com
 - Melissa Kops, Connecticut Green Building Council, 203-824-5001, melissa@ctgbc.org
- **Enable municipalities to adopt a “stretch” building code**
 - It is widely recognized that building codes are an important measure for scaling decarbonization¹⁸. In order to meet the state's GHG emission reduction targets, the built environment needs to be extensively transformed. Legislation is required to create a statewide energy efficiency stretch code that can be voluntarily adopted by municipalities. This stretch code will help municipalities achieve significant environmental benefits, reduce public health impacts, and reduce the energy burden of their residents through energy efficiency. The energy stretch code would require better energy-efficiency than the base code for all new builds and major renovations. In Massachusetts, a specialized opt-in stretch code is being developed to empower local municipalities to achieve net-zero by 2050.
 - Points of Contact
 - Melissa Kops, Connecticut Green Building Council, 203-824-5001, melissa@ctgbc.org
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 - Leonard Wyeth, Connecticut Passive House, 860-526-5111, lwyeth@wyetharchitects.com
- **Implement Building Energy Labeling**

¹⁵ https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GHG_Emissions_Inventory_2018.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/ACT/PA/2011PA-00080-R00SB-01243-PA.htm>

¹⁷ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/ACT/PA/2013PA-00298-R00HB-06360-PA.htm>

¹⁸ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/TOB/H/PDF/2021HB-06572-R00-HB.PDF>

- o It is important for home renters and buyers to know what to expect to pay in utility bills when they purchase or rent a home. Transparency is critical for homebuyers to know the quality of the largest purchase they will make, and to hold property owners accountable for the energy-efficiency of their units so renters are not surprised with unaffordable energy bills. Building Energy Labeling¹⁹ will incentivize property owners to improve energy efficiency in their rental properties rather than incentivizing landlords to include these electricity, heating and cooling costs in the rental rate to avoid complying with the Home Energy Label disclosure law.
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- **Set a Target for Air Source Heat Pump Deployment**
 - o Data from the US Census shows that in Connecticut 42% of housing units use heating oil as their primary source of heating. Commercial buildings across the state also predominantly use heating oil and natural gas for heating. Using data from the emissions inventory, emissions from the thermal/heating sector are growing. Given the volatility of fossil fuel prices and the lifespan of fossil fuel furnaces, it is not cost-effective to continue to use such fuels for winter heating. Air source heat pumps (ASHP) are an efficient, cost-effective alternative for heating buildings. Promotion of ASHPs also offer the means to stabilize energy costs and support energy efficiency jobs. Following the example of New Jersey, New York, Maine, and others, we should pursue legislation that creates a target or incentives for ASHP deployment. An assessment of the benefits for all new housing units to utilize ASHP would also help Connecticut residents manage heating costs while providing safe, clean heat.
 - o Points of Contact
 - Tom Swan, Connecticut Citizen Action Group, 860-729-5712, tswan@igc.org
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- **Revise the Data Center bill (PA 21-1)**
 - o Data centers are one of the most energy-intensive building types, consuming 10 to 50 times the energy per floor space of a typical commercial office building. There are concerns that the industry will want 25–50-megawatt diesel generators and would add to the pollution burden of environmental justice communities. Legislation was passed as an “Emergency Certification” to incentivize construction of new data centers in Connecticut without a public hearing or any requirements to meet standards that would mitigate energy use, emissions, or water consumption. Amendments to PA 21-1 should include: prohibiting diesel or fossil fuel back-up power to protect environmental justice communities; requirement that the most energy-efficient servers be used; require that construction of data centers meet an all-electric standard; require that data centers conserve water by requiring air cooled or closed loop water systems; require that buildings be heated with waste heat from the data center, and allow excess heat to be used for thermal energy storage and or community heating needs; require data centers to meet sustainability goals of the municipality in which they are located.
 - o Points of Contact
 - Lori Brown, CT League of Conservation Voters, 860-236-5442, lori.brown@ctlc.org
 - Samantha Dynowski, Sierra Club, 860-916-3639, samantha.dynowski@sierraclub.org
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Promotion of Renewable and Clean Energy

¹⁹ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/TOB/S/PDF/2021SB-00882-R00-SB.PDF>

Issue: To help meet emission and energy targets, Connecticut has procured multiple sources of renewable and clean energy. Additionally, Connecticut has established targets in its renewable portfolio standard (RPS). However, as the state and region move toward sector-wide electrification, Connecticut must build on these efforts.

Solutions:

- **Create a battery storage strategy for replacement of fossil fuel peaker plants**
 - Connecticut has relied on natural gas-powered peaker plants to meet infrequent peak electricity demand and grid flexibility needs. Peaker plant energy costs are as much as 1,300% more than the average cost of electricity, and in Connecticut these plants typically run less than 100 hours/year²⁰. Peaker plants are also a source of significant nitrous oxide and sulfur dioxide emissions, and are predominantly located in disadvantaged communities, sited in or near mostly low-income communities and communities of color. Renewable deployment and battery storage can reduce if not eliminate the need for peaker plants, particularly as battery and renewable costs rapidly decline. A strategy for peaker replacement through renewable and battery deployment would not only reduce ratepayer costs but would also help address environmental justice issues plaguing communities across Connecticut.
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 - Nathan Frohling, The Nature Conservancy, 203-980-5149, nfrohling@tnc.org
- **Expand solar program caps**
 - Connecticut's Virtual net metering (VNM), Shared Clean Energy Facilities (SCEF), and Annual Non-Residential (Commercial Solar) Renewable Energy Tariff Program all encourage solar use although ratepayer participation, which is capped based on enrollment and/or energy produced. Recent history²¹ confirms that most commercial solar projects that would reduce energy bills paid by Connecticut businesses are never built due to these caps. The flat growth that DEEP has ordered on the commercial tariff program makes it particularly difficult for state businesses to access low cost solar. Additionally, these caps are lower on a per capita basis than in other New England states and currently impede adoption of solar at scale. We acknowledge the importance of avoiding siting solar in environmentally sensitive areas especially rivers and streams and on farmland that is presently and actively farmed. Based on the clean energy goals set by the state and the success and multiple benefits of the programs, there is a need to lift or significantly increase these caps so all Connecticut ratepayers have reasonable access to these energy saving programs.
 - Points of Contact
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- **Issue incentives for buildout of solar canopies**
 - Meeting Connecticut's clean energy needs will require a range of renewable sources, with solar playing a significant role. The search for sites for solar projects has led to conflicts between the interests of clean energy and the preservation of prime agricultural land and forests; these conflicts will invariably become

²⁰ <https://www.cleangroup.org/wp-content/uploads/Dirty-Energy-Big-Money.pdf>

²¹

<https://www.eversource.com/content/ct-c/business/save-money-energy/explore-alternatives/renewable-energy-credits/lrecs-large-medium-zrecs>

more acute in the future. One way to avoid or minimize these inevitable conflicts is to site solar arrays on land that has already been “degraded,” including parking lots. Solar canopies can be a major component of the future electric sector in Connecticut and implementation of this technology needs to be supported by public policy. Research²² has shown that there are over 8,300 potential sites in the state and that solar canopies have the potential to produce 37% of the state’s current electricity consumption. Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey all have solar incentives that help defray the cost of installing solar canopies and such a tariff incentive structure should be adopted in Connecticut. This incentive structure would address how such projects are prioritized and how much incentive they can receive.

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 - Mike Trahan, Connecticut Solar and Storage, 860-256-1698, miket@connssa.org
- **End fossil gas expansion policies**
 - o In direct contradiction to the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), our state’s greenhouse gas reduction law, Connecticut has policies that promote the expansion of fossil gas (or what the industry calls “natural” gas). We have become a hub for dirty energy in the region. To move us away from dirty, polluting energy, legislation to end fossil gas expansion policies are needed. This should include legislation to restrict new fossil fuel power plants, end the failed gas expansion program, and repeal the pipeline tax. Adoption of these policies will give DEEP the tools it needs to reject unneeded dirty power plants, protect ratepayers from funding unneeded pipelines, and enable Connecticut to pursue a clean energy future in line with the state’s climate commitments under the GWSA.
 - o Points of Contact
 - Samantha Dynowski, Sierra Club, 860-916-3639, samantha.dynowski@sierraclub.org
 - Shannon Laun, Conservation Law Foundation, 475-261-9538, slaun@clf.org
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Diversity, equity, and inclusion in climate action

Issue: Historically, state policies and programs have been designed by people of relative affluence, and this biases the allocation of funding and resources to middle class and high-income populations. In the matter of climate action, we must take special notice of underrepresented communities’ needs, such as access to safe, affordable housing, access to stable and clean energy, safe and affordable clean heating and cooling, and safe public buildings.

Solutions:

- **Include environmental justice language from HB 6551 to address issues of air quality**
 - o Despite policies to promote clean energy, environmental health, and environmental equity, Connecticut continues to permit new polluting facilities in environmental justice communities. Our most disadvantaged communities – already facing the greatest threat from the climate crisis – are overburdened by accumulated pollution and continuing emissions at levels not found in wealthier communities, leading to disproportionate adverse health effects and diminished opportunity. Until Connecticut law recognizes the impact of existing pollution, unrestrained permitting of polluting facilities will prevent us from realizing our climate, environmental quality, and environmental justice goals. Strengthening section 22a-20a²³ of the Connecticut General Statutes to allow DEEP to deny permits for new polluting sources in overburdened communities will add teeth to the State’s policies. DEEP should be required to consider the

²² <https://pacecleanenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PACE-Solar-Canopies-Executive-Summary-June-2021.pdf>

²³ https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-20a

cumulative impact of existing pollution, as informed by substantial input from diverse stakeholders, to prevent any environmental justice community from bearing even greater environmental and public health harm. Additional changes to 22a-20a should ensure that any disadvantaged community threatened by pollution has meaningful opportunities to participate in the permitting decision and should hold polluters accountable for fulfilling the promises they make to the communities they pollute.

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 - Nathan Frohling, The Nature Conservancy, 203-980-5149, nfrohling@tnc.org
 - Anne Hulick, Clean Water Action, 860-232-6232, ahulick@cleanwater.org
- **Engage and educate the public on climate change and climate impacts through state campaigns**
 - o There is a strong need to create a climate resource center that supports disadvantaged communities by increasing access to climate and energy education in such communities²⁴. Educational resources must be culturally inclusive and empower communities to take action. Climate and energy educational materials can provide communities with meaningful opportunities to understand climate change in Connecticut, become aware of current state climate mitigation and adaptation policies/programs, and the means to participate in the policy process. Governor Lamont's Executive Order 21-3²⁵ directs the state to provide resources and materials to "vulnerable communities", potentially setting up a process by which communities of color and low-income communities can access climate change educational materials. However, such efforts lack enforceability and we should look to strengthen existing legislation or create new legislation to guarantee access for these communities.
 - o Points of Contact
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- **Create clean energy workforce training**
 - o Siting new power generation facilities creates jobs and opens opportunities to develop the workforce and invest in the community. Nationally, the energy sector overall has fewer women and people of color than the overall economy²⁶. As we move towards a clean energy future, there must be an equitable approach to green industry development which would include a workforce development component, strengthening the capacity of low-income communities and communities of color to participate and benefit. There is a need for new short term, wrap-around workforce models that create careers within communities of color and create opportunities for minority business ownership. Strengthening PA 21-43²⁷ to prioritize workforce development in such communities is necessary to help Connecticut achieve environmental equity for those communities that will be most impacted by new power facilities.
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- **Require climate and energy education in public schools**
 - o Lack of science, energy, and climate change education is placing underrepresented communities directly in harm's way and widening the economic disparities gap. The results are lack of opportunities and lack of information on climate, energy, and environmental justice and health connections to climate and energy which leave communities unable to advocate or connect with opportunities. Science teaches decision

²⁴ <https://www.aceee.org/research-report/h1801>

²⁵ <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-21-3.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/USEER%202021%20Key%20Findings.pdf>

²⁷ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/ACT/PA/PDF/2021PA-00043-R00SB-00999-PA.PDF>

making strategies, problem solving, health, life science, and opens doors for higher paying career opportunities. Informed citizens can make better choices and connect to resources which will help communities make efforts to improve resilience in schools, homes, businesses, which will all need to deal with the impacts of climate change. Likewise, not informing the public will leave them in the dark. Strengthening the requirements for climate change education in the Next Generation Science Standards and providing the necessary materials and funding are a critical first step. This will help close the opportunity gap, further environmental justice and protect the environment by educating all children in grades three to twelve. In the classroom, children can be taught the impact of global warming and learn how to adapt to climate change while providing the tools necessary to be part of a green economy.

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- **Establish accountability and metric practices on climate and energy funding allocations with an accounting of service to overburdened and underserved communities**

- o Currently there is state funding that supports climate and sustainability organizations related to resilience in communities of color. The challenge is to create programs that are effective through accounting and metrics to ensure continued capacity building. Connecticut should pursue legislation that ensures planned progress through continued stable annual funding while also prioritizing accountability, transparency, and goal achievements. Funding programs targeting communities of color and low-income communities help them achieve sustainability and resilience in the face of climate change. The state must support independent operation of businesses and NGOs operated by people of color, which will then work in collaboration with state department heads to address the longstanding socio-economic disparities which impact everything from health to wealth in our state.

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