



Connecticut Fund
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Contact: Laura McMillan, 540-292-8429, lmcmillan@ctenvironment.org

CFE: Long-awaited Comprehensive Energy Strategy has wins and missed opportunities

“More is needed to meet our climate commitments,” says CFE energy expert

New Haven, Conn. – On Wednesday afternoon, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection issued its [draft 2017 Comprehensive Energy Strategy](#). The plan is intended to shape state energy policy, including strategies to meet the requirements of the Global Warming Solutions Act, to manage costs to consumers, and to ensure grid reliability.

The Global Warming Solutions Act, passed in 2008 with strong support from Connecticut Fund for the Environment, sets greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2020 and 2050. A study last year by Acadia Center found that Connecticut’s emissions had started to rise again, and that the state is no longer on track to meet the 2020 goal.

Claire Coleman, climate and energy attorney for CFE, said:

“This plan has been a long time in the making, and we appreciate the efforts of so many time- and resource-strapped CT DEEP staff in preparing it. We’re pleased to see the emphasis on transitioning to a cleaner energy economy, including reduced reliance on natural gas and biomass, and continued strong investment in energy efficiency.

“However, there are some significant missed opportunities. The draft strategy actually *slows* the state’s trajectory for increasing Connecticut’s percentage of energy from renewable sources. Stronger endorsement of the need to get a full-scale shared solar program up and running and procurement of offshore wind is needed to ensure we put in place a long-term plan to replace outdated fossil fuels and low-carbon energy sources like nuclear with renewable energy sources like solar and wind. The draft also lacks specific policy recommendations needed now to ensure Connecticut makes progress on decarbonizing the transportation sector, and fails to endorse a market based solution for reducing our dependence on carbon (e.g. carbon pricing or cap-and-trade)—only promises yet another study and report that will push decision-making about electric vehicle deployment out for months or years more. And, troublingly, there is no modeling in the draft strategy to demonstrate whether the proposals will actually reduce carbon emissions enough to meet our 2020 or 2050 goals under the Global Warming Solutions Act.

“As currently written, the draft plan does a great job of identifying the critical need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but doesn’t get Connecticut where we need to be to meet these critical reduction targets. More is needed to meet our climate commitments under state law and the recent goals Governor Malloy signed onto in the wake of the U.S.’s withdrawal from the Paris climate accord. Throughout the comment period we’ll be partnering with citizens and fellow advocates to push DEEP and the Governor’s Council on Climate Change to ensure the final strategy has the aggressive, specific targets and program recommendations needed to meet our climate commitments and get Connecticut on track to thrive in a cleaner energy future.”

DEEP will accept public comments on the draft strategy until September 25. Details on how to submit comments and a schedule of public meetings and technical meetings are available at www.ct.gov/deep/energystrategy.

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