



CONNECTICUT ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

CONTACT:

Richard Strauss, Executive Director
(860) 527-2161

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 22, 2009

Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering Releases Study on Preparing for Connecticut's Energy Future

Hartford, CT – The Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) released a report today entitled “Preparing for Connecticut’s Energy Future” and reported the study’s findings and recommendations at a Briefing for the General Assembly’s Energy and Technology, Environment, and Government Administration and Elections Committees.

Legislation adopted in 2008, Public Act 08-168, *An Act Concerning Energy Scarcity and Security, Renewable and Clean Energy and a State Solar Strategy*, named CASE to conduct the study through the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCFEF), on behalf of the Renewable Energy Investment Board (REIB).

The study found that alternative energy leadership structures exist that could take advantage of the energy-related expertise of existing agencies and entities to oversee and address comprehensive issues and thereby improve effectiveness without imposing significant cost on the state’s budget or imposing an additional layer of bureaucracy on a decentralized system of programs and responsibilities.

The study recommended restructuring Connecticut’s energy leadership by reorganizing and combining entities, as well as the appointment of a Secretary of Energy who reports to the Governor.

The proposed new energy leadership structure would address long-term comprehensive policy and planning involving all energy-related sectors – electricity, space heating/cooling and transportation – as well as environmental aspects of energy issues, such as climate change.

The recommendations include the creation, through legislation, of an executive branch Connecticut Energy Office (Energy Office), to be headed by the Secretary of Energy (secretary), a Connecticut Energy Coordinating Council (Coordinating Council) and a Connecticut Energy Stakeholders Advisory Group. The secretary would serve as chairperson of the Coordinating Council, a restructuring of the existing Connecticut Energy Advisory Board (CEAB) and the Governor’s Steering Committee on Climate Change (GSC). Those two entities, which would be dissolved, contain several overlapping members and a majority of the state’s key energy leaders. Staff of the Energy Management Unit at the Office of Policy and Management would be reassigned to serve as staff for the new Energy Office.

– More –

Additionally, it is suggested that the secretary and the Coordinating Council oversee the establishment and activities of a Clean Energy Technology Center that preferably would be developed through expansion of an existing energy-related public benefit, quasi-public corporation. The Center would coordinate and oversee clean and renewable energy research and development efforts taking place throughout the state on behalf of the secretary and the Coordinating Council.

The study includes a best practices review of other states' organizational structures; a review of Connecticut's energy legislative history; input from Connecticut energy stakeholders through a series of focus group meetings; and a review of the state's current energy structure.

The study found that, while Connecticut is a leader in some energy areas, the state lacks long-term vision, strategic planning, interagency coordination, and a designated focal point for overall accountability regarding the effective achievement of defined energy goals and benchmarks.

The new Secretary of Energy would be the focal point for energy issues in the state and serve as the principal liaison with the federal government and other states. The Energy Office, under the secretary's leadership and with support and guidance from the Coordinating Council, would be responsible for identifying and prioritizing state energy goals; evaluating the effectiveness of the state's energy programs and agency responsibilities and ensuring comprehensive energy plans will be developed and routinely updated.

The CASE report suggests that utilizing existing resources would reduce the sometimes costly duplication of efforts, while providing more focus and clarity with centralized policy making and decentralized program implementation. The new proposed energy leadership structure would have the flexibility and authority to coordinate and evaluate short and long term energy policies, planning, programs, and their implementation, as well as react to and anticipate change within Connecticut's broader external environment.

The recommended leadership structure would allow Connecticut to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and create jobs through a new energy economy in a coordinated way. It will help Connecticut to become a leader in streamlined effective comprehensive energy policy, planning and implementation, with a focus on one- to two-year short-term planning, five-year plans and 10 to 20-year long-term goals. Long-term meaningful planning coupled with ongoing accountability will provide the best opportunity for success.

###