



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Further Information Contact:

**Dennis Schain**  
**(860)424-3110**  
**dennis.schain@po.state.ct.us**

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**P R E S S R E L E A S E**

## **DEP Announces Move to “Clean” Energy First State Agency to Get Power from Renewable Sources**

The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that it will be the first state agency to take advantage of the “clean” electric power options now available and urged Connecticut citizens, businesses and government entities to consider doing the same.

Governor M. Jodi Rell said DEP’s decision to select the ‘clean’ energy options “is a smart move and the right move” in today’s energy environment.

“I am delighted that DEP is leading the way and setting an innovative example for other state agencies, businesses and Connecticut citizens,” Governor Rell said. “I believe that as people become familiar with the energy options that are available more and more will decide to choose clean, green energy.”

The Governor said, “Connecticut has adopted an aggressive Climate Change Action Plan and we are a leader in addressing clean air and climate change issues. As part of these efforts, we have a goal of purchasing 20 percent of the state’s energy from ‘clean’ sources by 2010. Today’s announcement at DEP is a very positive first step toward achieving that goal.”

During an announcement ceremony at DEP’s main offices in Hartford, Commissioner Gina McCarthy said, “Our agency’s move to ‘clean’ energy alternatives brings to life our commitment to protecting the environment and the public’s health. The use of ‘clean’ energy sources reduces *both* our reliance on fossil fuels and power plant emissions that include greenhouse gases closely linked to climate change.”

Commissioner McCarthy also said, “We know that the cost of electricity generated from renewable sources of energy is still slightly higher than the cost of conventional power created from coal, oil, natural gas and nuclear plants. This differential, however, must be viewed as an investment in our future. An investment in protecting our environment, in reducing our nation’s reliance on imported energy and in stimulating the development of renewable energy sources.”

Under guidelines that took effect April 1, Connecticut governmental, commercial and residential customers can opt for electricity from two companies now supplying the electric grid with renewable energy sources – from wind, hydroelectric and landfill gases. The two companies are Sterling Planet, headquartered in Norcross, Georgia, and Community Energy, based in New York City.

For every energy customer choosing the “clean” energy options, the amount of power supplied to the grid from traditional sources will be that much lower. To date, about 5,500 customers, mostly residential, have opted to receive electrical power generated from clean energy sources.

DEP currently uses approximately 7.6 million kWh of electricity each year. The department’s annual electric bill is about \$1.2 million. The move to “clean” energy is expected to add an estimated \$125,000 to DEP’s energy bill. DEP is opting to transfer from the “conventional energy” option and split its energy purchase evenly between the Sterling Planet and Community Energy.

Commissioner McCarthy said eliminating DEP’s reliance on conventional sources for its energy needs will reduce emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) – the gas most closely associated with climate warming – by 3,716 tons a year. This is the annual equivalent, she noted of:

- Taking 730 cars off the road
- Using 7,839 less barrels of oil
- The total electrical needs of 670 households
- Or growing 88,434 tree seedlings for 10 years to help remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere

Joining Commissioner McCarthy at the announcement ceremony were Lise Dondy, Chief Operating Officer of the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund and Brian F.Keane, President of SmartPower and representatives of numerous organizations active in environmental and energy issues.

In her remarks, Ms. Dondy said, ““The state of Connecticut, through the DEP's purchase of ‘clean’ energy, is leading the way in achieving its commitment to purchase ‘clean’ energy for state government facilities. Throughout Connecticut, there are communities that are also joining the state in this move and encouraging their local residents, businesses, and institutions to support ‘clean’ energy as well.”

During his remarks, Keane said, ““This historic purchase today by the DEP is just further proof that the state of Connecticut is a true national leader on clean energy. Indeed, the department’s purchase is ‘lighting the way’ and proving to people that ‘clean’ energy is, in fact, real. It’s here. And it’s working.”

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