

THE PROBLEM

The most recent Connecticut GHG Inventory report indicates that we are not on track to meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets and that emissions in some sectors continue to grow. Connecticut is falling behind in our efforts to achieve our climate goals. When the first round of comprehensive state laws to address climate change were passed, Connecticut was a leader on the issue. In recent years, our neighboring states have updated their climate laws, adopting more stringent targets, establishing greater accountability, and providing mechanisms for enforcing the law.

A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

If we are to be successful in achieving our greenhouse gas reduction obligations, we must follow the lead of our neighboring jurisdictions and provide accountability and enforceability for our landmark climate law. Climate friendly policies that move us along the path to a net zero future will strengthen our economy while protecting our communities from the most devastating impacts of climate change. But we must act deliberately and consistently.

Updating Emission Reduction Targets

The most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicates that we have already committed ourselves to a changed climate based on current emissions. The magnitude of those impacts, however, are still within our control – if we act boldly. A net-zero by 2050 emissions target is now recognized as a critical and necessary target. To ensure that we maintain steady progress towards our medium and long-term reduction goals, interim benchmark reduction targets should also be established.

It is time for Connecticut to update its landmark climate law to reflect current circumstances and needs.



Establishing Accountability for Meeting Necessary GHG Reductions

To reach our climate goals, we need a commitment to act comprehensively across the government. State agencies and other administrative decision-making bodies must incorporate an evaluation of climate impacts in their decision-making. When an agency's action results in increased emissions, such action must be accompanied by appropriate offsetting mitigation measures.

Enhancing Enforceability of Global Warming Solutions Act Compliance

Connecticut must clearly establish the ability of citizens to enforce the Global Warming Solutions Act. 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 take action to ensure the state is fulfilling its obligation 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.

Establishing a Connecticut Decarbonization Roadmap

Connecticut is not on track to meet emission reduction targets under the GWSA. To do so we must know how we're going to get there. We need specific policies, programs, actions and decisions – a roadmap. Although there are valuable planning tools the state uses such as the Comprehensive Energy Strategy and Integrated Resources Plan, DEEP staff have acknowledged that there is no comprehensive, integrated decarbonization roadmap for CT to achieve our critical climate targets. To remedy this, legislation is proposed that directs the state to prepare such a roadmap. Massachusetts has completed a similar plan. Because DEEP does not have the resources to complete the roadmap, legislative efforts need to secure state funding that can also help enable additional federal funding. "Failure to plan is a plan to fail."

Expanding Authority to Adopt Policies and Regulations to Meet our Greenhouse Gas Reduction Obligations

Within the framework of accountability and enforceability, our administrative agencies must have the ability to act to meet the climate crisis. Agencies should have the authority to promulgate regulations and establish programs to mitigate climate emissions in order to ensure success in meeting our statutorily mandated greenhouse gas reduction obligations. Only with stronger accountability and enforcement mechanisms, can our state's climate law achieve the GHG reductions it was intended to. We all deserve the right to clean air and a sustainable future



MORE INFORMATION

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