



## *July 2021 – Climate/Environmental Updates & More Work to do*

*Because of you, CCAG has one of the best track records in Connecticut for fighting and winning on environmental and climate justice issues. Over the coming year and beyond we will be intensifying our focus on tackling the Climate Emergency in Connecticut. The following are just a few highlights (many overlap) of what your support makes possible.*

### **CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT - LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

**VICTORY! SB 356 AAE an Energy Efficiency Retrofit Grant Program for Affordable Housing.** This is an ambitious plan to reduce our energy burden and rapidly decarbonize homes in Connecticut by deploying energy efficiency upgrades, solar panels and zero-emission heat pumps, and by doing it in an equitable way through focusing on low to moderate income residents. This initiative was spearheaded by the CT Renewables coalition

**VICTORY! SB 999- AAC a Just Transition to Climate-Protective Energy Production and Community Investment.** This law will ensure a just, equitable transition to a green economy. It will help create good jobs for those who need them most, will protect the overburdened and underserved from polluting industries, it will improve existing affordable housing units, and it will advance racial justice.

**MAJOR WIN!** The Connecticut General Assembly passed a bill implementing the state budget, which includes a provision requiring the Connecticut Department of Insurance to address the climate-related risks of insurers. *This provision is the nation's first law requiring insurers to address climate risk.*

Tom Swan, Executive Director at the Connecticut Citizen Action Group, released the following statement: "This is an important provision that will protect shareholders, policyholders, and the general public. While Connecticut has taken action to fight climate change, the insurance industry has been slow to move. It continues to play a critical role in fueling the climate crisis by underwriting and investing assets in fossil fuel companies. It's important that Connecticut, the insurance capital of the world, take the lead on a serious approach to dealing with this threat."

**VICTORY! SB 837 PFAS Chemicals in firefighting foam and food packaging.** PFAS chemicals, otherwise known as "forever chemicals", are linked to a number of severe diseases and never break down in the environment, creating long-lasting harm to people and the planet. This bill restricts PFAS chemicals in food packaging and in firefighting foam, and requires the state to implement a take-back program of old foam, and to utilize a fluorine free foam in the future unless required by federal law.

**Partial VICTORY SB 1037 An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management AKA "The Bottle Bill".** CCAG was a major proponent of the original bottle bill in the 1970's. You may have been a part of that. Now we need to bring this policy into the 21st century. This bill will increase the scope of what types of beverage containers can be recycled, and increases the redemption rate from 5 cents to 10 cents. It will also increase the handling fee that the bottling companies pay to recycling centers, which will support and expand access to recycling.

*However, industry was successful in inserting damaging changes, and we need to keep the fight going as this bill is implemented. CCAG is keeping a very close eye on this one. See the statement [here](#).*

## **CT FOSSIL FUEL PLANTS**

Despite the legislature passing strong greenhouse gas reduction targets in the state's Global Warming Solutions Act, and more recently with Governor Lamont setting a goal of 100% carbon free electricity by 2040, significant action to reduce fossil fuel generation has not followed. A new gas-burning power plant has been approved for construction in Killingly. To date, the Governor and the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) have not taken any meaningful steps to reduce our reliance on natural gas outside of SB 356.

## **STOP THE MONEY PIPELINE: INSURE OUR FUTURE CT**

In January 2020, a coalition of over a dozen Connecticut groups launched Insure "Our Future CT", a major mobilization targeting the insurance sector responsible for the funding of the climate crisis.

Connecticut is known as "The Insurance Capital of the World." However, the same insurance companies that operate in our backyard, are investing billions in the fossil fuel industry: The Hartford, Travelers and WR Berkley.

As a state-wide advocacy group, CCAG has a unique opportunity to move major U.S. insurers out of fossil fuels and into a sustainable future.

Connecticut is a leader on climate action, yet our insurance industry is failing to take the action necessary to avoid climate catastrophe. Instead, the top insurers in our state are investing billions in fossil fuels, and insuring an untold number of fossil fuel projects.

The Insure Our Future campaign is a part of an international coalition called "[Stop the Money Pipeline](#)" coalition, which is over 91 organizations strong. Read more and/or sign up for updates here: [InsureOurFutureCT](#)

## **RENEW CT - Working for a Just, Equitable, Sustainable CT**

Three crises - mass unemployment, climate change, and the coronavirus pandemic - disproportionately harm frontline and vulnerable communities including Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color. Connecticut can address these issues most effectively through regional coordination with other New England states.

The Renew New England Alliance is a growing coalition of more than fifty leading labor unions, racial justice organizations, frontline communities, and environmental advocates that have come together to tackle these overlapping issues. The core of our plan, to end mass unemployment, recover from the pandemic, and address climate change, is a Jobs Guarantee which will ensure that everyone who wants a job will have one. Visit [renewnewenglandalliance.org](http://renewnewenglandalliance.org) for in depth details. Visit [www.ctrenews.org](http://www.ctrenews.org) for local efforts.

**These are just a few highlights. For more information on these or other issues, please visit our website, [join our email list](#) to be kept updated, or contact:**

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