

Taking Action to Address Climate Change

At first glance one wouldn't think that the insurance industry, power plants and school lunches have anything in common --- but they do. All three areas have been the focus of bold steps taken to address climate change in Connecticut. Their success stories are in a recently released report documenting 2005 progress towards implementing the CT Climate Change Action Plan. The report highlights many actions taken by individuals, businesses, universities, towns and civic organizations -- and calls for on-going action and commitment in order to continue the reduction of greenhouse gases in our state.



Greenhouse gases, largely the result of burning of fossil fuels, are contributing to changes in climate -- including fluctuations in rainfall patterns, a rise in sea level, and a wide range of impacts on plants, wildlife, and humans. In order to address this problem, the Governor's Steering Committee on Climate Change along with over 80 organizations, including businesses, non-profit organizations, state and local government agencies and academic institutions, came up with a comprehensive plan that was adopted in February 2005. The plan recommends 55 practical actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the state.

In the months since the Plan was adopted, Connecticut has taken numerous steps toward its goal. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has submitted the Clean Diesel and Clean Car Incentive Plans to the state legislature -- these plans outline options that will reduce pollution and improve public health. State agencies and municipalities are opting to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles. Universities, colleges and other schools have launched groundbreaking initiatives by designing "green buildings" and purchasing locally grown food for their cafeterias. And over 6,000 Connecticut households and businesses have signed up to purchase clean energy.

Connecticut's accomplishments have been so notable that other states now look to us as a model. A few success stories are highlighted in this newsletter

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and more can be found at www.ctclimatechange.com. Despite this progress, much remains to be done. DEP, along with the other members of the Governor's Steering Committee, look forward to working with organizations and individuals throughout the state to continue creating a cleaner, healthier environment and a more stable climate for generations to come.

3 Climate Change Success Stories . . .

Cheshire Farmer Gordon Drazen sells fruit to Chef Tim Cipriano for another active Farm-to-School program at Dodd Middle School



Insurance Industry Takes a Close Look at Climate Change

In October 2005, Connecticut sponsored the first-ever summit with insurance industry executives and state regulators on the business risks and opportunities of climate change. The summit, co-sponsored by DEP, the State Treasurer, and the CT Insurance Department, allowed insurance industry leaders to share their vision and actions with more than 100 participants, including 7 of Connecticut's top 10 insurers.

Insurers who have incorporated climate change into their strategic planning recognize not only the risk from increased storm intensity, but also the opportunities of investing in clean energy technologies and developing new products. In addition, insurer's risk management business is profoundly impacted by climate change. At the summit, Joseph Boren, Chairman and CEO of AIG Environmental, highlighted that 7 of the 10 most expensive disasters in U.S. history occurred within the past 4 years and that Connecticut's shoreline makes it particularly vulnerable to insurance losses. For additional information on future workshops and to view the video recording of the summit, visit www.ctclimatechange.com/Insurance.html.

Be recognized for your actions!
Submit a nomination to the NEW
Governor's Steering Committee
Climate Change Leadership
Awards Program --

www.ctclimatechange.com/CTClimateChangeLeadershipAwards.html

Helping School Kids Love Their Veggies

Getting locally grown produce into school cafeterias is a win-win proposition. It not only improves children's health and nutrition but also increases marketing opportunities and income for farmers. Decreasing "food miles" (the distance that food travels from field to plate) reduces greenhouse gas emissions and other pollution. Currently, over 50 school districts in Connecticut are buying food from more than 30 local farmers.

South Windsor has been a leader in bringing locally grown food into its school cafeterias under the leadership of food service director Mary Ann Lopez. Potatoes from David Schaffer's farm star in their popular baked potato bar, and the children enjoy other locally grown fruits and vegetables purchased directly from four different farms. But the program is not limited to the cafeteria. A biology class is composting kitchen waste at the high school and a botany class is using their greenhouse to grow herbs and tomatoes for the lunch program.

For more information on the Farm-to-School program, visit the CT Department of Agriculture's website www.ct.gov/doag or contact Rick Macsuga at (860) 713-2544.

Powering Up the Cap-and-Trade Program

Governor Rell and the governors from 6 other states (New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware) signed a landmark agreement in December to implement the first greenhouse gas Cap-and-Trade program in the U.S. The program will initially be designed to stabilize and then reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from large power plants by 10 percent. The agreement is the result of Connecticut's participation with the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) which worked to develop this regional strategy to control greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

"With Governor Rell and the other governors in this region supporting the RGGI agreement, we open a new chapter in our effort to address climate change and to develop a more sustainable energy policy," remarked CT DEP's Commissioner Gina McCarthy at the announcement of the agreement, "We know carbon dioxide emissions released by the burning of fossil fuels are directly linked to climate change. Today we are literally saying let's 'put a lid' on these emissions and let's commit to the transition to renewable energy sources."

The RGGI cap-and-trade program will cap the total (set the maximum) amount of CO₂ emissions at current levels from 2009 to 2014. This will be followed by a 10 percent reduction by 2018. Under this program, power plants must hold "allowances" to cover all of their CO₂ emissions at the end of each 3-year compliance period.

Power plants without sufficient allowances can:

- Purchase allowances from plants that have reduced their emissions levels
- Use offset credits created by undertaking GHG reduction programs outside the energy sector
- Purchase allowances from those held and auctioned by the state – which will generate revenue to support investments in energy efficiency, clean energy technology and consumer rebates which will benefit the public sector.

For more information, visit www.rggi.org.



Plans for the Future

The Connecticut DEP, with the help of many stakeholder groups, has completed several comprehensive plans that will help guide the policies and programs of the agency in the coming years. These include:

The Clean Diesel Plan outlines measures that would significantly reduce harmful diesel emissions from buses and construction equipment and includes steps that could provide cost-effective approaches to improving the state's air quality.

www.dep.state.ct.us/air2/diesel/index.htm

The Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy identifies species of greatest conservation need and their affiliated habitats. The strategy also identifies the priority research needs and conservation actions needed to address problems facing these species and habitats.

www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/wildlife/geninfo/fedaid/cwcs/home.htm

The Connecticut Statewide Forest Resource Plan will serve as an overview for planning future activities within CT's forests and includes priority action steps towards sound forestland protection and management in the state. www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/forestry/stateland/fresplan.htm

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides an assessment of both the need and demand for outdoor recreation statewide and will allow DEP as well as municipalities to more effectively improve and provide outdoor recreation opportunities to our residents and visitors.

www.dep.state.ct.us/rec/scorp/scorp.htm



Recycling Rundup

Giving Recycling the Old College Try

Three CT colleges are in competition this winter for a coveted trophy. But not for basketball glory - the trophy is for recycling! Connecticut College, Wesleyan University and Yale University are participating in a ten-week competition (Jan. 29-April 9) called RecycleMania, a 5-year old event that aims to increase recycling and minimize waste on the nation's college campuses.

RecycleMania began in 2001 as a friendly competition between Miami and Ohio Universities. It has since grown to include 93 campuses across the nation and is endorsed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Waste Wise program and other national environmental organizations. Its goal is to increase awareness about recycling and waste minimization and ultimately lower the waste generated on campuses. Colleges can compete in 3 categories: (1) the most recyclables, (2) the least trash, and (3) the highest recycling rate. The participants must provide trash and recycling measurements weekly during the contest.



Programs like RecycleMania are a natural fit for colleges. First, there is usually a high degree of environmental interest and action on college campuses. Secondly, recyclables and food waste from residence and dining halls can make up a large percentage of campus trash, so there are opportunities for significantly decreasing the amount of trash that needs to be disposed.

At Yale University, Recycling Coordinator CJ May, says the objective of having RecycleMania is to bring awareness and greater interest about this important issue to students, faculty and staff. This is Yale's 3rd year in the contest. Connecticut College and Wesleyan will be competing for the first time. Both colleges are also using RecycleMania to increase awareness and communication about recycling on their campuses. Amy Cabaniss, Campus Environmental Coordinator at Connecticut College, says the school will track recyclables and the amount of food remains that go to a piggery. At Wesleyan, Bill Nelligan, Associate Director of Environmental Health, reports that increased recycling and charitable donation of many items left by students at the end of the year has the added benefit of decreasing the cost of managing trash at the school.

For more information on RecycleMania, go to www.recyclemaniacs.org/

The Connecticut Climate Change Action Plan has identified recycling as a key recommended action for the state. Colleges and universities can contribute significantly to achieving the goals of the plan. The Green Campus Initiative was established to encourage institutions to implement solutions to climate change. For ways to get your campus involved, go to www.easternct.edu/depts/sustainenergy/greencampus/greencampus.htm

A Paint Primer

It's spring and many of us start thinking about home improvement. The challenge for the environmentally conscious person is choosing the best paint for the results you want with the least impact on your health and the environment.

Paints that homeowners use are either latex (also called acrylic latex) or oil-based (also known as alkyd). Both types can contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or other toxic additives that can be harmful to your health when inhaled and contribute to poor air quality. Many of the products used with paints, such as thinners and strippers, also contain chemicals that are harmful.

Here are pointers for picking the right paint:

- ❑ Avoid oil or solvent-based paints. Oil-base paints can be trickier to use and require more chemicals, like turpentine for clean up. Instead, use latex paints, which are water-based. They are less harmful to you and the environment, clean up with water and are less expensive than oil-based paints. Latex is formulated for interior or exterior use. Exterior latex usually contains biocides to prevent the formation of mold and mildew.
- ❑ Look for paint with low or no VOCs and low odor. Green Seal, an independent, non-profit organization that identifies products and services that cause less toxic pollution and waste, has compiled a listing of paints that meet their standards. www.greenseal.org/certproducts.htm - paints
- ❑ Consider buying recycled content paint. Although the



color pallet may be limited, these high-quality paints can be an economical and environmentally preferable alternative to regular latex.

www.productstewardship.us/prod_paint_other.html

- ❑ Try out the color before you invest your money and time. Some paint manufacturers now sell samples in a wide range of colors. This can also provide a test of how well the paint will cover the surface or if you need a primer.

- ❑ Determine how much paint you need. You will save money and storage space by calculating the right quantity of paint for the job. Ask the retailer for help or use an on-line paint calculator. For a list of web sites that have paint calculators, go to www.earth911.org/master.asp?s=lib&a=paint/links.asp#calculator.

- ❑ Protect yourself and your family when painting. Read the label before you start and make sure your work area is well ventilated. If you are living in a house or apartment that was built before 1978, it may have surfaces painted with lead paint. Lead can cause irreversible brain and nerve injury. Before you prepare any surface, such as sanding, you should have it tested for lead. See, *Lead Paint Safety: A Field Guide for Painting Home Maintenance and Renovation Work* - www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Lead/pktmp000.pdf.



- ❑ Store leftover paint properly so that it can be used for touch-ups or another project. You want to keep air out of the can, so clean all the paint from the rim and firmly tap the cover in place. Store the tightly sealed can upside down. A skin will form on the lid and help the paint stay fresh. Store the paint away from heat and extreme cold. You could also donate usable paint to a community or school group. Nothing left over? Remember to recycle the paint can as scrap metal!

- ❑ Dispose of old paint properly. Do you have a lot of old, partially filled paint cans? If the latex paint has hardened, has rust or mildew or there just isn't enough of it to do anything with, you can completely dry the paint out by leaving the lid off or transfer it to a leak-proof bag and put enough kitty litter or shredded newspaper in the bag to absorb the liquid. You can then put the bag in your regular trash and recycle the can.

Latex paint is not considered hazardous waste, so it would not be accepted at a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection. However, latex paint manufactured before 1990 may contain mercury, so that should be accepted. (Oil-based paints and stains are hazardous waste and would be accepted at a HHW collection. To find a collection for your town, visit

www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/recycle/hhwsched.htm.) The towns of Barkhamsted, New Hartford, Winchester, Essex, Avon, Sharon and Salisbury have a DEP permit to collect paint. If you live in one of those towns, contact the transfer station for more information.

Now you know all there is to know about paint. If you could only decide on a color...

A Tree Grows in Connecticut

Encouraging tree planting is a long-standing Connecticut tradition. In 1886, the state legislature recognized both the economic and environmental importance of trees when it declared, "the Governor shall annually, in the spring, designate by official proclamation an Arbor Day." The first CT Arbor Day occurred the following year and celebrations have continued on an annual basis since then. Arbor Day is now officially designated as the last Friday in April, providing an opportunity for schools, communities, and businesses to celebrate the benefits of trees and get outside to plant more.

A tree can be a way for us to remember our past and look into our future. Trees are by far the oldest living things so they have already witnessed historical events hundreds of years old. For example, most Connecticut school children have learned the story of the famous Charter Oak while learning about American history. There are still a few trees alive in the state old enough to have been around in the Colonial period. They may have shaded a bartering session between colonialists and Native Americans back in the 17th century!

Trees provide many other benefits -- from beautifying our lives to absorbing the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂). When trees absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere, they sequester or store the carbon and release the oxygen, providing one of the most important sinks for carbon in the global ecosystem. Trees can also be a very effective means to save energy. Strategically planting shade trees on sunny sides of your house can shield it from the hot sun and reduce the cost of air conditioning in summer while exposing your house to the warming sun in winter. In urban areas, the hot summer air can be 2-10 degrees F hotter than the surrounding countryside. Reducing this "heat island effect" of buildings and pavement in urbanized areas is another positive effect of planting shade trees.

Trees planted along streets are subject to more stressful conditions, such as limited root space



Trees beautify the streets in this New Haven neighborhood.

and close proximity to traffic and road salt. To help overcome these challenges, DEP's Urban Forestry Program and other organizations, such as the CT Urban Forest Council, provide information, assistance, and support to those involved with keeping urban trees healthy. In each city and town, there is also a Tree Warden, a public official designated to know and care for such public trees as those along our streets and in our parks. A number of communities in Connecticut now have model tree programs including Groundwork Bridgeport, Trees for Hartford Neighborhoods, Milford Trees Inc., and Yale's Urban Resources Initiative in New Haven.

What can I do for Arbor Day and throughout the year to celebrate trees?

Learn more about National Arbor Day and planting trees – www.arborday.org/

Select and plant shade trees –

www.cturbanforestcouncil.org/

Investigate buying descendants of historic trees –

www.historictrees.org/store.html or

1-800-320-8733

Learn how your municipality can become a Tree City or ReLeaf community –

www.cturbanforestcouncil.org/highlights.html

Get information from DEP's Urban Forestry Program on exploring CT forests –

www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/forestry/urbanforest/urbanfor.htm or contact Chris Donnelly at

(860) 424-3178.

Solid Waste Management Plan Moving Forward

In January, DEP and the External Stakeholders Working Group held a meeting to gather final comments and thoughts on the Preliminary Draft of the State Solid Waste Management Plan. The Preliminary Draft contains six objectives and 38 related strategies. While many of the strategies have been met with general acceptance, some issues yet remain to be resolved.

One significant issue is that even with achieving a 50% recycling rate, there will still be an in-state disposal capacity shortfall of 668,000 tons per year of municipal solid waste. Other issues include: mandating #1 and #2 plastics recycling, funding to municipalities, redirecting unclaimed bottle deposits for recycling education and other related uses, recycling and/or disposal of construction and demolition debris, and applying the solid waste fee to waste going out-of-state.

DEP is evaluating the comments received to date and is currently drafting the Plan. It will be subject to public meetings and hearings held in May or June with an anticipated adoption date of August 2006.

For more information -- see www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/solidw/swplan/index.htm or contact Tess Gutowski at (860) 424-3096.



Ask
Eartha



Note: This feature offers answers to select environmental questions. Send your question to the editor's address -- judith.prill@po.state.ct.us and watch future issues for an answer.

Dear Eartha:

I live near Long Island Sound and I was wondering if we should be using the "garbage disposal" in our sink? Or should my family throw our food waste in the garbage can so that it will go to a landfill?

— Richard Y., Norwalk, CT

Using in-sink garbage disposals is NOT a good idea, and it's true even for households not located anywhere near the Sound. If your home is hooked up to a municipal sewer, your ground-up food scraps end up at the sewage treatment plant where the wastewater is biologically treated and the effluent (liquid portion) is discharged directly into waterways that eventually lead to Long Island Sound. The sludge (solid portion of the treated waste) must be disposed in landfills or incinerators. Adding high nitrogen materials (food scraps) to the wastewater from your home raises the biological oxygen demand and requires more energy to be used at the treatment plant. If you have a septic system, putting food scraps, grease, etc. down the garbage disposal shortens the life of your system and could contribute to failure over time and cause water pollution.

So what happens if you throw food scraps into the garbage can?

The majority of garbage generated in Connecticut does not go to landfills but instead to waste-to-energy plants (sometimes referred to as resource recovery facilities or incinerators). Food wastes (or "organics" as they sometimes are referred to) contain a large amount of water and make the garbage harder to burn. The ash generated from burning the garbage is disposed of in specially designed landfills.

Although we don't have the perfect solution to handling all the waste we generate in Connecticut, we can agree that organics should be composted whenever possible. Many towns, including Norwalk, provide residents with drop-off locations for yard waste and/or leaves, which are then sent to centralized compost facilities. DEP is working on encouraging development of compost facilities that can handle food scraps from commercial and institutional venues (grocery stores, universities, prisons, restaurants, etc.) where there are large quantities of source-separated organics available.

You can help by composting most of your food scraps and yard trimmings at home...every little bit helps! During composting, organics are converted into stable, usable forms of nutrients that are quickly absorbed by plants to which compost is applied.

- *Eartha*

For information on home composting, see "Composting Has A-Peel!" in the Spring 2005 issue of P2 View at www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/p2/p2view/p2viewspring05.pdf or call (860) 424-3365 for a free brochure. For more information on other ways you can protect Long Island Sound, visit www.dep.state.ct.us/olisp/shore/what_you_do.htm



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For a free subscription, please contact Judy Prill at (860) 424-3694 or e-mail your request to judith.prill@po.state.ct.us. If you want to save paper and postage by reading the P2 View electronically, you can either subscribe to the listserv or view it on-line (see www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/p2/).

P2 View is published by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Pollution Prevention.
Editor: Judy Prill; Contributors: Nan Peckham, Mary Sherwin, Connie Mendolia, Lynn Stoddard, Kim Trella, K.C. Alexander, Tess Gutowski, Tom Metzner

Publication of this newsletter is funded by a grant from the U.S. EPA.

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper using water-based ink.



P 2 C A L E N D A R

A S E L E C T I O N O F E N V I R O N M E N T A L E V E N T S

March 25, 2006

Community Gardens Conference Bridgeport

Join with other members of CT's community gardens movement and attend workshops on a variety of topics, such as finding an urban site to farm, composting, conflict resolution and working with children. For more information, visit Beardsley Zoo's website at www.beardsleyzoo.org/whats-new-events/events-calendar.asp or call (203) 394-6576.

April 7 - 9, 2006

The 4th Annual Northeast Climate Conference New Haven

Students and climate activists of all levels of experience will gather for a weekend of workshops and trainings, speakers, tours, and fun activities at Yale University. Sponsored by the Climate Campaign, a youth-led coalition that brings together student groups, local organizations, and major environmental networks throughout the Northeast. For more information, visit www.climatecampaign.org or call (203) 285-6647.

April 4, 2006

Connecticut Hospital Environmental Roundtable Farmington

The Institution Recycling Network staff will present "Everything You Need to Know About Green Construction and Demolition" with a focus on recycling opportunities. Other speakers include DEP and CTGreen Building Council. For more information, call the DEP Office of Pollution Prevention at (860) 424-3297.

April 26, 2006

Arbor Day with Governor Rell Hartford

Join the Garden Club of Hartford as it celebrates its 90th anniversary by planting 90 trees throughout the City. The celebration begins at 2:30 p.m. at South Green/Barnard Park, Main St. For more information, call Knox Parks Foundation at (860) 951-7694.

Earth Day is April 22nd - www.dep.state.ct.us/earthday/earthday.htm