



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW JERSEY

TESTIMONY GIVEN AT THE ENERGY MASTER PLAN HEARINGS

AUGUST 17, 2015

My name is Nancy Hedinger and I am the President of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. The League of Women Voters is guided by a principle of active and informed participation by citizens in government. We are a nonpartisan political organization – not an environmental organization and our comments directly address the impact of the 2011 Master Plan (EMP) on the residents of New Jersey.

First, we are disappointed in the lack of opportunity for significant public testimony. These hearings, held in August with little notice, are not in the best interest of good government. All efforts should be made to ensure citizen participation and promote a fair, transparent and open public process. The League of Women Voters of New Jersey asks, going forward, you make a commitment to robust public participation and allow adequate time and notice for testimony and comments on the resulting 2015 Energy Master Plan.

With the damaging effects of Super Storm Sandy still evident in many parts of our coastal state, we cannot pretend our electrical distribution system is adequate for dealing with future weather events. Increased warming and resulting sea level rise (already being observed in the amount and frequency of nuisance flooding) guarantee that similar and even more severe storms lie ahead. The public deserves much more resiliency—power outages of up to 12 days in widespread areas of our state, even with ‘ordinary’ storms are not acceptable.

The League of Women Voters is well aware that no source of energy exists without some costs – it takes energy to create energy. However, we need to

educate policy makers, legislators and the public about the need to look at energy from a “cradle to grave” perspective, including historic subsidies as well as health and environmental costs so we stop undervaluing renewables and overvaluing fossil fueled energy generation. Taking external and indirect costs into account will necessarily result in a different ordering of priorities versus a simple cost benefit analysis that looks only at direct costs. To this end, we again ask that the word “sustainable” as opposed to “cost effective” be the most repeated worded in the New Energy Master Plan.

Additionally, when we testified on the draft 2011 EMP four years ago, the League noted that the goals in the draft represented a step backwards from the ambitious goals of the 2008 plan, which stated, “New Jersey is faced with an opportunity to transform its current energy system from one whose flaws threaten to undermine the security of our economy, to one that is responsible, efficient, clean, affordable and reliable” (2008 EMP, p. 101).

The goal of the State should not only be to reduce costs but to encourage residents to reduce energy consumption and encourage conservation and greater efficiency and to support renewable sources of energy. The 2011 EMP lists measures such as smart grids, smart metering, energy efficient appliances and constant public education and outreach as integral to the plan’s success, yet the Clean Energy Fund has been cut by over \$1 billion. Further, since removing New Jersey from the Regional Green House Gas Initiative in 2011, we have lost out on the opportunity to earn over \$200 million in the sale of CO₂ allowances, money that should have been used for the development of clean energy technology and subsidies for retrofitting homes and businesses to make them more efficient and less costly to heat and cool. A new Energy Master Plan must prioritize funding for energy conservation and efficiency.

The 2008 Energy Master Plan made us an example to other coastal states in the Northeast by emphasizing plans to move ahead with aggressive development of solar and off shore wind power, sources of energy derived exclusively within the state. The goal of generating 1,100 megawatts of offshore wind capacity along our coast is still a laudable one. We must now follow the lead of Rhode Island,

which has broken ground on the Northeast's first off shore wind project. Since the 2008 EMP was approved there have been great improvements in the capability of battery storage for renewables, reducing many of the claims of intermittency problems with renewable energy sources. We urge this body to return to the ambitious solar and off shore wind development goals of the 2008 EMP and establish robust renewable portfolio standards and subsidies for renewable energy in a revised NJ Energy Master Plan.

We must look beyond 2020 and not reduce the 2008 goal of 30% energy from renewables to the current 22.5%, but expand them by a program of sustainable, renewable energy choices so that we can reach the goal of achieving 80% of our energy from renewable sources by the year 2050 as set forth in the New Jersey Global Warming Response Act of 2007.

The League of Women Voters recognizes that all energy comes with costs and that no form of energy is free from risk. But this body has an obligation to protect our residents from possible contamination of their water, land and air. The 2011 EMP emphasizes the benefits of natural gas with no reference to the dangers of extracting gas from underground shale deposits, the consumptive use of water, the difficulty of disposing of waste from fracking operations and the risks (to human health and the environment) of transporting natural gas by rail, barge or pipeline infrastructure. Once again, the League asks for a moratorium on hydrofracking in the Delaware Basin until rigorous, unbiased scientific studies are completed. This is no time to be calling for "cost effective" solutions when long term, life cycle impacts are not factored into the equation. The risks are too great. As we've pointed out before, this administration will be a distant memory in 20 years' time but the residents of this state deserve to know their future is not endangered because of decisions that may save dollars in the short term.

Footnote: Last year, at this time, Senator Smith brought together several stakeholder groups, many of whom have testified on the 2011 EMP, to work on anticipated issues related to a transition to renewable energy in New Jersey. The groups looked at four areas: Mitigating Solar Development Volatility; Achieving the 2007 Global Warming Response Act Goals; Reconsidering Incentives for Class I

Renewables; and Decoupling Utility Regulations. On July 10, 2014, the working groups presented their reports to the Senate Energy and Environment Committee. The BPU should review transcripts of the hearing or read the reports as part of this fact-finding process. The League participated on the Global Warming Task Force, which made recommendations for Transportation and Land Use, Heating and Building, and Energy Production and Distribution. We will forward a copy of the draft report for the record.

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