

February 28, 2014

Ms. Meredith Hatfield  
NH Office of Energy and Planning  
95 Pleasant Street  
Concord NH 03301



Dear Ms. Hatfield:

The New Hampshire CleanTech Council is pleased to submit these additional comments to the Energy Planning Council and the Navigant team consultants as you consider further changes to the draft Vision statement that was the subject of the Council's meeting on February 21.

The CleanTech Council represents a broad spectrum of employers in the clean technology sector in New Hampshire. We seek government policies and regulations that reduce the amount of imported fuels and keep the dollars that pay for those fuels in the New Hampshire economy. We aim to provide a stable and predictable policy environment from which this mainstream market may flourish in New Hampshire, bringing with it reduced costs, a hedge or elimination of fossil price volatility, reduced air and water pollution, and high-paying jobs that cannot be off-shored. Such a business environment not only provides benefit for our industry but also for all other industries in New Hampshire. Certainty of policies, minimizing energy cost volatility, and long-term environmental sustainability are essential considerations in the state's energy framework. For many employers, cost of energy is only one consideration of many. Perhaps even more than absolute cost, these factors will serve to make New Hampshire an attractive state for businesses to relocate and grow. We think these factors need to be given stronger emphasis in the draft Vision.

The CleanTech sector, which can contribute greatly to our state's energy security and economic vitality, depends on a skilled workforce. If businesses in our sector perceive that such a workforce is not available here, they will locate and grow elsewhere. A highly skilled and well-trained workforce is fundamental to our state effectively responding to energy challenges. This point is not given sufficient emphasis in the draft Vision. Additionally, ensuring a cleaner environment by way of energy security and economic vitality protects tourism, a significant part of the state's economy, but also protects our quality of life within the environment so that New Hampshire will remain an attractive place to live for workers.

During the presentation on February 21, Representative Pastor made reference to the economic disparities that exist within our state that derive from access to natural gas pipeline distribution. Much of New Hampshire's geographic area is unlikely to see pipeline gas within the 10-year scope of this energy plan. For residents and businesses within these areas, heat energy (40% of NH's total energy consumption) is largely dependent on much more costly imported heating oil, propane and utility-provided electricity. The plan Vision needs to better recognize that these energy access disparities create a substantial economic disincentive to employers seeking to locate in these areas and the cost of living of their employees. When neighboring states and regions have access to pipeline gas and/or renewable power contracts, they become a far more attractive site for potential employers. In addition, most areas of New Hampshire that are not served by pipeline gas have greater thermal requirements than more southern areas that have access to pipeline gas, creating greater disparity. The reduction of

our state's dependence on imported heating oil products needs to be given stronger, more explicit, reference in the Vision statement.

Additionally, the CleanTech Council believes that a healthy balance between distributed resources and grid-scale renewable energy is essential to our future energy mix, and critical to reliability of the grid, security of our energy system, and stability in future energy costs. The right balance will better retain wealth within our state and minimize the exportation of both energy dollars and pollution.

The CleanTech Council believes the final Vision needs to communicate a greater sense of urgency around the importance of energy planning, policy and private sector investment to the economic viability of our state. New Hampshire is the second most petroleum dependent state in the country in per capita use across all energy pathways (Hawaii is #1). This is an unacceptable condition in today's marketplace. Our ability as a state to address fundamental challenges in energy use, efficiency, transitioning to renewables, and reduced dependence on imported non-renewable fuels over which we have no control is fundamental to our state's economic well-being. Equally important is strategic vision of how to deploy the private capital and investment that is needed to effect this transition. This point is not given strong enough emphasis in the draft Vision.

With emphasis on these additional points, we believe the consultants and the Energy Advisory Council will have crafted a strong vision statement that will provide the planning process with clear priorities and direction as you move to the development of strategies and actions to achieve this Vision. We commend you for the excellent, but still improvable, draft presented on February 21. We look forward to continued participation in the planning process.

Sincerely,

Taylor Caswell  
Chair, New Hampshire CleanTech Council