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I am submitting this idea for an aggressive plan for residential energy efficiency.

With the spike in fuel costs (Home heating costs for recently increased 50% for oil and 60% for natural gas [2008 #s]) and the subsequent negative economic impacts, lowering the use of oil and natural gas for heating homes should be a major priority. There are approximately 1.3 million housing units, with over 95% being in urban areas (1998 numbers, DECD). The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association says the national average cost to heat a home with oil this winter will be just under \$2,600 (higher in New England). State government should as soon as possible an aggressive effort to ensure that all CT residences are made as energy efficient as possible, using present, affordable, but state-of-the art measures. Also \$40% of human carbon monoxide releases are from buildings, making conservation a priority in addressing climate change. The most direct way to save energy costs in buildings is to increase insulation by installing energy efficient windows (that can save from 25 – 40% annual energy costs, depending on type), and air sealing and insulating attics, floors and walls (up to 20% heating and cooling savings). I am proposing that the state government, along with private industry, initiate a comprehensive program using regulations and financial incentives and assistance to ensure that every Connecticut home have energy efficient windows and a highly energy-efficient building insulation envelope by a certain date. The real and potential savings through such an intervention would be tremendous. A residential energy standard would be developed based on present knowledge, and be made mandatory through law. Along with this “stick” would come the “carrot:” a revolving loan program, along with grants for very low-income households. Preceding and accompanying this would be an aggressive public education campaign (“It’s in your interest and your patriotic duty to insulate for energy independence!”). Besides lowering energy costs almost immediately, this initiative would spawn substantial economic growth across the state. Present and new local building, remodeling, and insulation companies would train and hire hundreds of workers, many of these low-skilled urban citizens who need such employment. This would generate increased tax revenues that used to further finance this project. It would also lower the long-term cost of state-subsidized fuel reimbursement. Finally, the energy cost savings per homeowner/landlord/renter (more money in hand) would potentially spur further economic growth. The Office of Budget and Management would be able to generate more specific estimates of energy savings and economic impact (and costs) of implementing such a program.

Thank you,

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