

For Immediate Release:

February 2, 2024

Media Contacts

Jayson Velazquez, Climate and Energy Justice Policy Associate
jvelazquez@acadiacenter.org, 860-246-7121 x203

A Call to Action: Connecticut Climate Justice March and Acadia Center's Support for 2024 Clean Energy Priorities

Hartford, CT – In the lead-up to the start of Connecticut's 2024 legislative session, Jayson Velazquez – Acadia Center's Climate and Energy Justice Policy Associate – today joined climate, energy, and environmental advocates, organizers, and activists in Connecticut's Climate Justice March. In this call to action, participants and speakers called on legislators, officials, and organization leaders to take adequate action to address climate change. In addition to the Climate Justice March, advocates, organizers, and activists [issued a Climate Justice Letter](#) with a detailed list of equitable solutions to align Connecticut with its emissions reduction targets outlined in the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA).

In addition to contributing to the list of solutions in this letter, Velazquez gave a speech during a stop on the Climate March in Hartford to highlight the pressing need to address energy inequities across the state.

Acadia Center expresses specific enthusiastic support for energy priorities outlined in the Climate Justice Letter:

- **Operationalize Procedural, Distributive, Corrective, and Contextual Equity:** Incorporate equity principles identified by the Governors' Council on Climate Change (GC3) and the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC) into Connecticut climate and energy plans.
- **Increase Funding for, Identify, and Address Barriers to accessing Energy Efficiency Programs including the Home Energy Solutions Income Eligible (HES-IE) Program:** Increase funding for efficiency programs to ensure maximum deployment of energy efficiency upgrades throughout the state, and ensure that adequate funding is devoted to workforce recruitment and training to ensure a robust energy efficiency workforce in Connecticut. The existing Community Partnerships Initiative could be leveraged to ensure barriers are identified, and solutions are collaboratively designed to provide increased access to energy efficiency programs.
- **Expand Renewable Energy Deployment:** Expand solar programs and establish targets for commercial, residential, and community solar projects, while addressing battery storage needs.
- **Require Renewable Energy Sources on New Commercial and Industrial Construction:** Support legislation to enable and incentivize municipalities to require renewable energy sources such as, geothermal, solar, heat pumps, etc., on new commercial and industrial construction.
- **Heat Pump Deployment and Building Electrification:** Invest in the electrification of newly constructed and existing homes. Support development of heat pump targets and financing programs, such as no-or-low interest loans for zero-emission heating equipment and necessary electrical upgrades to help support the transition to electric heat pumps and water heaters.
- **Carbon Free and Healthy Schools:** Support establishment of a \$25 million CT Green Bank program to help schools implement energy saving and renewable energy construction projects.

- **Grid Modernization and Grid Enhancing Technologies (GET):** Support regional collaboration among northeastern states to strengthen interconnectivity in electric grid development and ensure GETs are supported to better understand and develop electric capacity on our grid.
- **Equitable and Responsible Energy Infrastructure Siting:** Ensure the Connecticut Siting Council is empowered to address environmental injustices through analyses, collaborative and co-designed community-benefit agreements in the siting of energy generation and transmission infrastructure projects.
- **Data Accessibility, Usability, and Transparency:** Ensure data analysis capabilities are expanded at state agencies and considered as critical components of Connecticut climate and energy plans. Data should be publicly available, in usable tables, exportable formats, and opportunities should exist to request additional data to support advocacy efforts

Acadia Center will continue collaborating with partners across Connecticut to push these goals forward in 2024. We look forward to an energizing and productive legislative session in the coming months, in a year that will be pivotal for the state and region's progress in combatting climate change and inequity.

Although Acadia Center contributed to and participated in the development of the Letter issued today, we did not directly sign on due to some policy priorities extending beyond our scope of work.

For more information:

Jayson Velazquez, Climate and Energy Justice Policy Associate
jvelazquez@acadiacenter.org, 860-246-7121 x203

