

North Carolina's Energy Futures: Realizing A State of Opportunity **Energy Program of Work**

Overview

IEI recognizes the tremendous opportunity that North Carolina has to become a leader among its southeastern neighbors in the new energy economy. To do this, our energy policies must address a series of complex interrelationships and challenges presented by the demands of future population growth and economic change. At the same time, these challenges also present opportunity with the creation of new industries, new companies and new jobs. IEI seeks to support public and private sector efforts to reach this potential through specific public policy strategies.

Background

IEI's work to date is the result of a public policy process that engages stakeholders in the development and authentic debate of policy solutions. IEI convened stakeholders at a Leadership Summit in May 2007 to respond to IEI's research findings, offer expertise and opinions on the challenges and potential opportunities, and develop a proposed agenda to be further advanced by Working Groups held October 2007 – January 2008.

Comprised of more than 70 statewide leaders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, the Working Groups took these initial ideas and proposed and debated 20 action items that addressed five key areas:

- Improving Energy Efficiency in Buildings
- Reforming the Utility Regulatory Environment
- Recruiting and Sustaining New Energy Businesses
- Developing a Green Workforce
- Creating Financing Options

These action items were shared with more than 1000 attendees at the 2008 annual IEI Forum. Champions were identified to develop support and promote action for each item.

Immediate Next Steps

First, IEI will convene champions for six months through September 2008, supporting implementation strategies and promoting change through broad statewide communication and engagement. Second, IEI will focus on the core regulatory issues surrounding price, efficiency and alternative sources of energy in the electric sector through a business committee on energy (BCE). Third, IEI will organize Regional Forums to address local energy issues and generate support for broader statewide initiatives. Lastly, IEI will increase the use of its website (www.emergingissues.org) as a vehicle for exchange, debate and general communication around energy challenges and opportunities.

Contact Group

IEI will convene a contact group to track, review and report progress regarding the implementation of the action items developed by IEI's energy Working Groups. Some items are in early development stages, in which case IEI will play a catalytic role in working with the appropriate organizations to push these action items forward. However, other ideas are further

along in implementation and IEI will partner with other organizations already moving forward in these areas to provide support as these efforts progress.

Each action item has been placed in one of the areas mentioned above: Improving Energy Efficiency in Buildings, Reforming the Utility Regulatory Environment, Recruiting and Sustaining New Energy Businesses, Developing a Green Workforce, and Creating Financing Options. Primary champions have been identified for each category to continue developing support and promoting action for each item

Business Committee

The goal of IEI's Business Committee on Energy (BCE) is to focus on the core regulatory issues and practices surrounding price, efficiency and alternative sources of energy in the electric sector. In particular, this committee will inform and mobilize business around a comprehensive long-term vision for electric power that enlarges the use of renewable sources, dramatically increases energy efficiency, while ensuring that supplies continue to be reliable and affordable.

The committee will be recruited by IEI working in partnership with Sustainable North Carolina. It will be comprised of about approximately 24 business leaders drawn from across the state, and from different sectors of the economy. Three North Carolina business leaders will serve as co-chairs, including one, at least, who will represent energy suppliers.

Since the goal is a vision statement only, designed to serve as a backdrop to the deliberations and rule implementation of the Public Utilities Commission, there will be only two meetings in the lifetime of the committee, with work to be completed by August 1, 2008.

Statewide Regional Energy Events

In the fall of 2008, IEI will work with the seven regional economic development partnerships to marry local economic development goals with the larger energy themes developed at the Forum and in the Working Groups. These forums will focus on each region's assets and how these assets can be brought to bear to create green jobs and attract green businesses, thus allowing the region to thrive in the energy economy. As in past years, IEI will convene new combinations of leaders at these regional events in an effort to increase awareness of the challenges and opportunities within each region and to mobilize support for a transition to an energy economy in all corners of the state.

Ongoing Communications

Communications around IEI's Energy program of work will continue to establish IEI as the go-to resource for constituents as well as public policy, business and energy media by highlighting the work of the contact group, the business committee and ongoing efforts around the regional forums. In particular, IEI's website will be examined for new and different ways to engage constituencies and media through online debates, the energy calculator and ongoing updates.

IEI's key contributions and efforts to meeting energy challenges facing North Carolina will be leveraged to garner regional, state and national media coverage.