



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF NEW JERSEY

## TESTIMONY GIVEN AT THE 2011 ENERGY MASTER PLAN HEARINGS JULY 26, 2011

My name is Ellie Gruber and I am representing the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. The guiding principle of the League of Women Voters is the active and informed participation by citizens in government. We are a public interest organization, not an environmental organization. Our comments today directly address the impact on residents of New Jersey of the 2011 Draft Energy Master Plan. We plan to submit written comments at a later date, in addition to these given today.

We must emphasize from the outset that it is a fact that no source of energy exists without some costs. It takes energy to create energy. To provide for the future energy needs of the residents of New Jersey is a difficult task, and we appreciate the opportunity for the public to comment on the draft you have distributed.

In 2008, our first Energy Master Plan made bold statements and had bold goals. It stated that "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." (p101) It goes on to list the money saved by the residents due to these efforts, the jobs created, the investments made.

The one phrase the 2008 Plan did not use time and time again was the phrase "cost effective". This phrase, cost effective, is repeated as the main concern throughout this 2011 draft. It is the goal of business to be cost effective and to have profit as its goal. The goal, the task and the mission of governments, however, is to protect its residents at all costs. We should not be using the term "cost effective" when it comes to a future in our State. The government should have sustainable goals. It can be argued that a state government is a business, it issues budgets, it has a payroll, and it has to make hard choices. The government has a charge that is much more than that. We rely, we depend, and our lives, health and welfare depend on the government watching out for us, not watching the bottom line. The best kind of "cost effectiveness" in fact, is one that would promote energy efficiency, renewables and the long term jobs and careers that are created in those industries. We would ask that the word "sustainable" be the most repeated word in this report when it is completed.

We are particularly concerned with your report on business friendly solutions with no outside scientific study, such as your plan to promote hydrofracking as the answer to our dependence on coal. As new information and scientific studies on the results of hydrofracking and its chemical compounds become public, there is a real danger that our water resources, both quality and quantity, will be damaged. Your plan emphasizes the benefits of natural gas with no reference to the dangers in extracting the gas from underground shale deposits. The exact

nature of the mixture of chemicals used in the process has not been forthcoming, and is claimed to be proprietary and thus has not been open to scrutiny.

We ask that the Draft Plan stop promoting the benefits of a process that must be studied before any further permission is given. We ask for a moratorium on hydrofracking in the Delaware Basin until rigorous scientific studies are completed. It may be that there are ways to extract natural gas which are less harmful, we don't know that. But what we know is this is no time to be calling for "cost effective" solutions when long term impacts are not factored in. The risks are too great. This administration will be a distant memory in 20 years' time, that is the way of the world. But the residents of this state deserve to know that their future is not endangered because of decisions that may save dollars.

We are also concerned with your statement that solar energy costs outweigh advantages of increased rebates and incentives. Solar energy is in its infancy in our state, yet we are second in the national in solar installations. To state that solar energy is too costly flies in the face of facts that solar subsidies are a minute portion of Basic Generation Service. This program is truly cost effective, as you define it. We are puzzled, considering this draft statement, by the DEP press release only yesterday from the Governor that solar energy is a success and is encouraging more of its use, especially in brownfields and landfills. This statement, while welcome, contradicts statements in the 2011 draft. We hope that the recent statement will replace the draft statements, and this will be most welcomed.

The 2008 Master Plan in its table of contents is a bona fide list for energy savings, renewable solutions and a blueprint in order to bring our state into the future. This 2011 Draft takes a giant step backwards. The 2011 plan states that its very first goal is to "Drive Down the Cost of Energy for All Customers". To begin with, we are not customers, we are not looking for a bargain, and we are depending on you to keep us safe and healthy. You further state that both solar and wind must show economic benefits to warrant future investments. This is a business strategy, not the task of our elected officials. This should not be the first goal; the first goal should be to encourage more efficient energy generations, more conservation, and more renewable resources. The fact that you list this as the first goal means that you place the most importance on money, and that is not the role of our government. There has been no real proof that energy conservation means that our state will lose money, in fact, many new jobs have been created in "green technology" industries.

When energy costs more, residents use less. The goal of the State should not be to reduce costs, but to incentivize residents to use less energy, to consider alternative sources of energy. You correctly list measures such as smart grids, smart metering, energy efficient appliances and constant public education and outreach as integral to the success of any energy master plan. As you state, we have a diverse and educated population with excellent schools and research capabilities. Solutions due to collaborative contributions are the future of any scientific breakthroughs, and this should be encouraged, as an example, by encouraging challenges to universities to identify savings and new technologies, to identify risks and rewards.

The League of Women Voters urges the Governor and its EMP task force to take a step forward in promoting clean energy sources, not a step backward in looking for inexpensive short term solutions which in the end will result in enormous clean up costs in the long run. The plan must look beyond 2020, and not reduce the goals set forth by the previous plans, but expand them by program of sustainable, renewable energy choices, while at the same time charge our residents to realize the true cost of energy.