

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

Program Overview

Like many other states, North Carolina faces an increasingly difficult energy future. Our energy policies must address a series of complex interrelationships and challenges presented by the demands of future population growth and economic and environmental change. At the same time, these challenges present tremendous opportunity with the creation of new industries, new companies and new jobs. Through its multi-year program of work *North Carolina's Energy Futures: Realizing a State of Opportunity*, IEI is working with stakeholders in business, government, education and the nonprofit sector to address impending energy challenges, while positioning North Carolina to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the new energy economy.

Program Vision

IEI's work to date results from a public policy process engaging stakeholders in the identification, development and implementation of policy solutions. Based on ideas emanating from an Energy Leadership Summit, IEI's Working Groups generated a vision for North Carolina in the new energy economy: *Active participation in the transformation of the global energy economy represents the greatest economic opportunity for North Carolina since the Industrial Revolution. Our future economic well being, our environment and our national security depend on North Carolina leadership to drive the necessary changes.*

To realize this vision, action items were identified to foster the development and deployment of new technologies in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors, including action steps in five areas: improving energy efficiency in buildings, reforming the utility regulatory environment, recruiting and sustaining new energy businesses, developing a green workforce and creating financing options.

Next Steps

IEI is communicating this vision and action items to broader groups of stakeholders around the state, encouraging action on implementation and reporting on implementation success. Below is a brief overview of IEI's work in progress:

1. *Research on New Energy Economy Opportunities*

IEI is organizing researchers to identify economic development opportunities across a range of industries and activities that collectively comprise the new energy economy. IEI also is contributing to research on a statewide inventory of supply chain assets for new energy technologies. Complementing these research efforts is an upcoming IEI survey to identify policy and other obstacles to the entry and growth of new energy economy companies in North Carolina.

2. *Statewide Regional Energy Meetings*

IEI is working with North Carolina's seven regional economic development partnerships and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension service to hold a series of forums to explore economic development opportunities in the new energy economy on a regional basis.

3. *Business Committee on Energy (BCE)*

In partnership with the North Carolina Sustainable Business Council and with guidance from the Industrial Extension Service at NC State University, IEI is forming a committee to examine energy issues in the state. BCE members will discuss and debate the proper institutional structure for North Carolina to design and implement effective, comprehensive energy policies. The BCE might offer support in principle for reorganizing the way state government makes energy policy.

4. *Leadership Group*

IEI has formed a core leadership group from the business, government and non-profit sectors to track, review and report progress regarding the implementation of the action items developed by IEI's energy Working Groups.