

Clean Energy Now!

The Reasons Behind the Reason to Opt for Clean Energy

For what it costs to have a month or two of cable TV, or for a family of four to eat out a few times a year, you can support the fight against global warming and the move away from coal and oil energy dependence. It is easy, very easy: by signing up for the clean energy option on your UI bill, or on the town of North Haven website, you are doing something that will help both locally and globally, that will help you and your children, your town, the country, and the world.

Even so, many people are suspicious of the clean energy option, or don't see how it can, eventually, bring their energy bills down. Some people think it is a UI scheme designed to profit that company. Not true. UI, by law, must buy the cheapest energy it can find; therefore, most of our energy comes from coal-burning plants. If we ask for clean energy, however, UI must buy it, and the more people who ask, more will be purchased. Eventually it is hoped demand will reach a critical mass, and that demand will stimulate the development of more clean energy resources. The more demand, the more supply, the more the price will go down, and the more we can move away from dependence on polluting and damaging fossil fuels.

So where does clean energy come from? Right now there are two companies licensed by the State to provide it here: Community Energy and Sterling Planet. They both offer a three-part mix of clean power. Community Energy offers wind power from the Northeast, and from elsewhere in the country, and small hydroelectric power from New England sources. Sterling Planet, an energy broker, offers 50% wind power from elsewhere in the country, 25% regional wind power, and 25% low-impact hydroelectric.

Why these mixes? Because the more local the wind power, the more expensive it is. As a population-dense region, New England doesn't have as many places for wind farms as does, say, Texas. Their wind energy is in greater supply and is therefore cheaper than ours. By mixing the cheaper "national wind" into our "regional wind," Community Energy and Sterling can dilute the overall wind cost while still encouraging development of local wind sources through our demand.

Where is solar? Right now, solar energy is more expensive to produce in volume than is wind power, and so makes less economic sense. One wind tower alone can power 600 homes. And hydroelectric, while cheaper, is limited in its growth potential here in New England. So what we have in our clean energy options now are the most reasonable mixes that can be offered.

In spite of recent troubled economic times, we Americans remain the wealthiest nation in the world; yet, we are way behind other countries in our grappling with the energy issues.

The problems are so enormous we tend to think there is nothing one person alone can do, and it is easier to turn away from the issue. Taking the clean energy option is something we CAN do, and at very little annual cost. And it's better for us and our families by far than a string of burgers, fries, jumbo colas, or lattes.

Clean Energy Tip:

Turn off the drying cycle in your dishwasher. When the dishes are washed, open the door and let them air-dry.