



## CONTENTS

Smart Power Project .....	2
MAREC .....	3
Benefits .....	3
Challenges .....	4

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## Berkeley Lab and the Clean Energy Group

# CASE STUDIES OF STATE SUPPORT FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

## Public Education, Marketing, and Consumer Action: The Multi-Party Programs of Connecticut and Pennsylvania

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### CASE SUMMARY

#### *Case Description*

A number of state clean energy funds have begun to explore and implement public education and marketing campaigns for renewable energy. While the purpose of these campaigns is clear – to motivate electricity customers to purchase renewable energy – they have often faced mixed and sometimes unclear results.

Two specific renewable energy public education programs in the U.S. have broad coalition funding: The Smart Power Project in Connecticut and the Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition (MAREC) program in Pennsylvania. The Smart Power Project is funded at \$1.4 million per year, while MAREC has attracted \$881,000 of initial funding. This case examines the features, benefits, and challenges of these coalition-based efforts in public education.

#### *Innovative Features*

- The Connecticut and Pennsylvania campaigns represent two of the first publicly funded, large-scale renewable energy education and marketing efforts in the nation.
- Each program has been funded and supported not only by state clean energy funds, but also by a variety of other organizations.
- The Smart Power Project has worked to bring together a large number of foundations and community groups, while the MAREC program adds significant participation by the renewable energy industry.
- Both efforts represent innovative, multi-party coalition-based campaigns.

#### *Results*

- Neither the Connecticut nor the Pennsylvania campaigns have been operating for enough time to have strong results.
  - The Connecticut campaign has, after a period of

- planning, issued three grants and is still building its organizational foundation (an executive director has been hired, but board spots are still being filled).
- The Pennsylvania campaign has completed its first marketing and education phase (including television, radio, print, and direct outreach), with limited immediate results.
  - Based on the experiences of both funds, the benefits of a coalition-based campaign include access to additional funding sources and the development of a consistent message.
  - Challenges include identifying a common set of goals and interests, reaching agreement on campaign materials, and maintaining the willingness to fund a high-risk and initially low-reward effort.
  - The need for close coordination between these campaigns and the marketing efforts of renewable energy suppliers has also become apparent.

## CASE STUDY DETAILS

A number of state clean energy funds have begun to explore and implement public education and marketing campaigns for renewable energy. While the purpose of these campaigns is clear – to motivate residential and nonresidential electricity customers to purchase green power or customer-sited renewable generation – they have often faced mixed and sometimes unclear results. This case describes the use of multi-party education and marketing campaigns in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. While experience in these two states is too limited to claim success or failure, both the structure of the efforts and the preliminary lessons learned should be of value. While not discussed here, we should also note that the Clean Energy Funds Network is seeking to bring state clean energy funds together to work collaboratively towards the development of education and marketing campaign research and materials.

### *The Smart Power Project*

The Smart Power Project is a broad education and marketing program that brings together community and faith-based organizations, business leaders, institutions, and concerned citizens, working with foundations and the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund to help improve Connecticut's air quality through renewable energy purchases. The campaign is designed to overcome the apathy and inertia that often characterize the renewable energy marketplace by linking renewables with

community pride in a statewide effort to alleviate the health and environmental problems caused by air pollution from power plants. The goal of The Smart Power Project is to have ten percent of Connecticut's overall electricity supply provided by clean, renewable energy sources by 2010.

This two-year project will involve both a media and public relations campaign on the one hand, and a targeted grassroots and outreach campaign on the other. It will offer technical guidance to large commercial and industrial customers and educational information to small businesses and households about purchasing renewable energy, all with a theme of strong community pride and moving toward solutions to the air quality problems of the state. By identifying and attracting early adopters of renewable energy from the commercial, industrial, small business, municipal, faith-based, and residential (environmentally interested) sectors, those high visibility participants will ultimately attract additional participants, resulting in an expanded interest in renewable energy.

The Smart Power Project has an annual budget of \$1.4 million for two years. Half of the support will come from the participating foundations (The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Tremaine Foundation, The John Merck Fund, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and Surdna

Foundation), with the other half coming from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund.

In its early stages, The Smart Power Project was administered by Connecticut Innovations (under the name “Connecticut CAREs,” for Clean Air through Renewable Energy), with participating funders serving as advisory committee members. An independent nonprofit corporation has now been established and its 501(c)(3) application has been filed. Brian Keane has been appointed as the executive director and a board of directors is being recruited from key sectors to provide the organization with important outreach capabilities and to help maintain broad appeal across the state. The Board will also be critical in securing funding for The Smart Power Project beyond its initial two-year life. The Smart Power Project has recently issued grants to: Environment Northeast, for a program to build interest in and demand for renewable energy among the commercial and institutional sectors; Clean Water Fund, to develop interest among the 100 organizations that mobilized against polluting power plants; and Eco-Justice, to work with the faith-based communities of Connecticut.

#### ***Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition***

The Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition (MAREC) includes renewable energy businesses, energy and environmental government offices, and non-governmental organizations in a public education campaign to increase public awareness of and the demand for clean electricity in the Mid-Atlantic region. Included in the coalition are:

- seven federal and state agencies in the Mid-Atlantic region;
- nineteen renewable energy businesses;
- fifteen non-profit or charitable organizations; and,
- all seven renewable electricity retailers in the Mid-Atlantic region.

MAREC raised a total of \$881,000 for the first phase of its *Clean Your Air* campaign. Of this amount, \$433,000 came from Pennsylvania’s four sustainable development funds, \$215,000

came from three private foundations, \$118,000 came from nineteen renewable energy businesses, and \$115,000 came from government agencies.

The first phase of the *Clean Your Air* campaign includes paid television ads and related cross promotions as well as public service radio and print ads and several direct outreach programs. The campaign has produced a 30-second and a 15-second TV ad, a 30-second radio ad, and three print ads that may be used in various sizes and formats. The ads are designed to capture audience attention and drive the audience to the [www.CleanYourAir.org](http://www.CleanYourAir.org) website, which provides information on the key environmental, financial, and technical considerations important to consumers considering buying green power or installing on-site renewable generation.

The paid TV ads began on February 18, 2002 and ran through April 6, 2002 in the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh media markets. In the Philadelphia market, the paid television program reached about 98% of the target audience an average of 24.7 times, with 67.9 million gross impressions. In the Pittsburgh market, the paid television program reached approximately 98% of the target audience an average of 22.8 times, with 25.7 million gross impressions. In addition, public service radio ads ran 3,904 times on 42 different stations, achieving 7,070,800 cumulative audience impressions. These are impressive numbers, and are unprecedented within the region.

MAREC is a multi-year effort managed by PennFuture ([www.pennfuture.org](http://www.pennfuture.org)) with an executive committee comprised of MAREC members.

#### ***Benefits of the Coalition Approach***

Based on these early experiences, two of the critical benefits to coalition-based education and marketing campaigns include:

- **Fund Raising Success:** The success of the Connecticut and Pennsylvania campaigns in raising funds for public education has been considerable. Short of

very deep pockets, a broad-based coalition effort such as these two campaigns may be the only way to assemble the campaign budget that is necessary to be effective.

- **A Consistent Message:** Coordination among groups allows the presentation of a uniform, rather than competing, message by those groups, which strengthens the effectiveness of the message. The MAREC [www.cleanyourair.org](http://www.cleanyourair.org) site also integrates the energy education work of Power Scorecard and Green-e through direct links.

### *Challenges of the Coalition Approach*

There are also challenges to such multi-party collaborative approaches:

- **Identifying Common Goals and Interests:** With diverse groups, it can be difficult to balance competing views and interests and agree on the goals of the campaign. Some may want general education, while others may want a harder sell of green power. There may also be conflicts between the various industries that represent different paths to green power (the competitive green power provider versus the seller of renewable energy tags versus those that sell on-site renewable generation).
- **Reaching Agreement on Campaign Materials:** Great care is needed to ensure that too many cooks do not spoil the soup. The right balance between coalition member input and tight creative control is critical.
- **Staying the Course:** Meaningful changes in public understanding and acceptance of clean energy will not be achieved overnight. Other than the need to pay the electric bill, electricity has been an abstraction for most people for a century. Unrealistic goals will discourage coalition members. MAREC found that fewer than 100 people had switched to buying green power as a direct result of the first phase of its campaign. Because raising consumer awareness is a long-term process, it is perhaps short sighted to judge the campaign based on the

immediate response to its initial 7-week run of ads. Even so, few member organizations will be willing to continue to spend at the needed levels if this limited rate of “success” does not improve over time.

### *A Caveat: The Need for Concurrent Supplier Ads*

There is a significant difference between an awareness campaign and a marketing campaign. Marketing experts note that, if the goal is to get people to buy green power, an umbrella awareness campaign alone will not be very effective. Concurrent ads by clean energy suppliers marketing their products are needed. Without a strong “seller” identity, the public will have a difficult time understanding why a state clean energy fund is pushing green power. Education and marketing campaigns supported by clean energy funds should therefore be tightly integrated with the efforts of green power marketers and renewable energy suppliers.

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**INFORMATION SOURCES**

MAREC – [www.cleanyourair.org](http://www.cleanyourair.org)  
Materials provided by The Smart Power Project

Comments provided by: Lyn Rosoff (The Smart Power Project) and Peter Adels (Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future)

### ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY SERIES

A number of U.S. states have recently established clean energy funds to support renewable and clean forms of electricity production. This represents a new trend towards aggressive state support for clean energy, but few efforts have been made to report and share the early experiences of these funds.

This paper is part of a series of clean energy fund case studies prepared by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the Clean Energy Group, under the auspices of the Clean Energy Funds Network. The primary purpose of this case study series is to report on the innovative programs and administrative practices of state (and some international) clean energy funds, to highlight additional sources of information, and to identify contacts. Our hope is that these brief case studies will be useful for clean energy funds and other stakeholders that are interested in learning about the pioneering renewable energy efforts of newly established clean energy funds.

Twenty-one total case studies have now been completed. Additional case studies will be distributed in the future. For copies of all of the case studies, see:

<http://eetd.lbl.gov/ea/ems/cases/> or <http://www.cleanenergyfunds.org/>

### ABOUT THE CLEAN ENERGY FUNDS NETWORK

The Clean Energy Funds Network (CEFN) is a foundation-funded, non-profit initiative to support the state clean energy funds. CEFN collects and disseminates information and analysis, conducts original research, and helps to coordinate activities of the state funds. The main purpose of CEFN is to help states increase the quality and quantity of clean energy investments and to expand the clean energy market. The Clean Energy Group manages CEFN, while Berkeley Lab provides CEFN analytic support.

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