

***Statement on climate change by
Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
Commissioner Robert Klee***

*Excerpt from remarks to
Connecticut League of Conservation Voters*

Dec. 10, 2014

I've saved for last the most challenging and most important issue of our time — Climate Change. This is the issue that touches all parts of DEEP — and all parts of Connecticut, for that matter. Climate change is the common thread that connects many of our important initiatives. Climate change is the reason that DEEP was created.

Make no mistake about it. Climate Change is already here.

We see it in the warming waters and changing fish species of Long Island Sound. We see it in the new insects and invasive plant and animal species on our lands and lakes. And we saw it in the destructive force of recent storms that we will all long remember.

We have a moral imperative to act for the sake of our planet and future generations.

But DEEP can't do it alone. When it comes to climate change, you are the ones with the power to educate, motivate, and move Connecticut forward.

Given the political deadlock on the national scene and in some states within our region, Connecticut must be a beacon of light and hope.

Connecticut must be a place where we make it absolutely clear that strategies to reduce carbon emissions can work — and will grow our economy, not undermine it.

Connecticut must be a place where we make it absolutely clear that strategies to adapt to a changing climate can protect our citizens, our infrastructure investments, and our precious natural resources.

We've already put the building blocks in place.

We are driving down carbon emissions through our long-standing participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative — or RGGI. Once again we owe a big "thank

you” to former Commissioner Gina McCarthy for her hard work launching the nation’s first successful cap-and-trade system.

We’re also reducing emissions through expanded focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, fuel switching, combined heat and power systems, zero-emission vehicles, investments in public transportation, and transit-oriented development.

And we are addressing the unavoidable impacts of climate change through adaptation strategies that focus on land use, shoreline preservation, flood and storm surge projections, resilient engineering, policy and financing tools – as well as protection of natural resources, habitats and species.

We’ve built a powerful and unique partnership with UConn through the new Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation — or CIRCA. CIRCA is focused on applied research that will offer homeowners, businesses, municipalities and institutions realistic and environmentally sound policies and strategies to address and lessen the negative impacts of climate change.

Climate mitigation and adaptation is our Number 1 priority.

But, DEEP can’t do it alone. When it comes to our changing climate, you are the ones with the power to educate, motivate, and move Connecticut forward.