



THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

Firms join in 'green power' coalition Industry responds to governor's call

The Boston Globe

By Peter J. Howe, Globe Staff | June 16, 2007

Responding to a call from Governor Deval L. Patrick, dozens of Massachusetts "green power" companies, trade groups, lawyers, and academics agreed yesterday to launch a Massachusetts Clean Energy Council by fall and pledged tens of thousands of dollars to fund it.

"This is going to be a wondrous growth opportunity, and we can't get it wrong," said Brad Bradshaw, president of the Massachusetts Hydrogen Coalition, a three-year-old Beverly trade group promoting fuel cells and related technologies.

Bradshaw was among more than 100 business people, venture capitalists, academics, and government officials representing 82 entities who attended a Clean Energy Stakeholders Roundtable gathering at Boston law firm Foley Hoag LLP. Plans jelled at the event for the diverse, fast-growing cluster of industries to form, as Patrick urged this week, a trade group modeled on the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council and the telecommunications-oriented Massachusetts Network Communications Council. Patrick's energy and environmental affairs secretary, Ian A. Bowles, helped lead the talks.

Bruce N. Anderson, chief executive of Wilson TurboPower, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology spinoff in Woburn that makes high-efficiency electric generators and heating gear, said it will take two to three months to finalize plans for the group, whose working name is the Massachusetts Clean Energy Council. Organizers collected written promises totaling "tens of thousands of dollars" for start-up funding from conference participants, Anderson said. "Our intent is to create the most dynamic and effective organization the state has ever seen."

Major details -- including membership and officers -- still need to be worked out. But after day-long conversations, backers said there appears to be broad support for goals such as:

changing state building codes and utility regulation to promote conservation and alternative energy sources;

offering stronger incentives possibly including tax breaks or utility-bill rebates to consumers and businesses;

and setting higher requirements for state government to use renewable energy sources and more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Asked to agree on some future goals, participants said they can envision Massachusetts by 2020 creating 200,000 jobs in clean-energy-related industries, cutting energy use per capita 30 percent, and increasing use of renewable energy sources like wind, solar, and hydropower to generate 30 percent of the state's electricity.

Paul Gromer, executive director of the Solar Energy Business Association of New England, said many industry-specific trade groups recognize that a larger Clean Energy Council is no threat to them but will actually enhance their work.

"There are many political issues that cross technologies, and there are many things that we can do together that will benefit all industries," Gromer said.

One example: Changing utility regulation to make it easier for homeowners and businesses to install any kind of source of electricity, regardless of whether it's a rooftop solar panel, a backyard wind turbine, or a super-efficient device that generates heat and electricity. "We have more interests in common than we have differences," Gromer said.

Peter J. Howe can be reached at howe@globe.com. ■

