



**Written Public Hearing Testimony of
Kurt Westby, Commissioner
Department of Labor
Labor and Public Employees Committee
March 3, 2020**

Good Morning Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, Senator Miner, Representative Polletta and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with written testimony regarding **Senate Bill 354, An Act Establishing a Green New Deal for Connecticut**. My name is Kurt Westby and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Labor.

The bill proposes, among other things, to create jobs in the clean energy sector in order to assist the state in transitioning to a clean energy economy. The bill seeks to create a new office within the Department of Labor to concentrate any training, retraining and apprenticeship efforts that are geared toward clean energy jobs in one distinct unit, and tasks that unit with conducting a study to identify clean energy sectors and the training needs for the jobs in those sectors.

While the Department of Labor supports seizing the opportunities presented by the emerging clean energy sector, we believe it may be best addressed in a future session. The Governor's Workforce Council is preparing comprehensive recommendations for how Connecticut and Connecticut workers can play a leading role in emerging industries, including clean energy. Just last year the legislature passed Public Act 19-35, An Act Concerning a Green Economy and Environmental Protection, which requires the Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC), in consultation with DOL, the Office of Higher Education, the Department of Education, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, regional workforce development boards, and employers, to establish a career ladder for jobs in the green technology industry. A career ladder typically describes the progression from entry level positions to higher levels of pay, skill and responsibility. OWC, in coordination with those agencies, is currently in the process of accomplishing this task and has engaged AdvanceCT (formerly the Connecticut Economic Resource Center) as a consultant.

In order to develop the career ladder, research is being done to identify targeted occupations within the green technology industry and the top skill sets and competencies associated with each. Specifically, we will be gathering information on employment levels and projected growth; median wages; education and training levels required; job titles; skill sets and

competencies requested; and industry-valued credentials, certifications, and/or degrees. Moreover, the research will identify targeted occupations that provide relevant work experience and transferable skills, state specific resources such as training and volunteer opportunities that prepare people for entry into targeted occupations, and education and training opportunities to gain the skills and competencies needed for the targeted occupations.

As a result, we believe much of what the proposed bill is asking DOL to do is already being accomplished through the research and development of the career ladder for jobs in the green technology industry. Moreover, until this career ladder is developed, it will be difficult to establish training and apprenticeship programs to specifically target those jobs. We look forward to working with the sponsors of the bill and the Committee as we move forward with developing a career pathway for jobs in the clean energy economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.