

NJBIA: Keep Revisions to New Jersey Energy Master Plan

The Christie Administration's revisions to the energy master plan set more realistic goals for renewable energy use and will reduce some of the government-imposed costs that drive up energy bills, NJBIA Vice President Sara Bluhm said today in testimony before the Senate Environment Committee.

The committee is considering legislation to revise the energy master plan to maintain the 2011 Societal Benefits Charge (SBC), a surcharge on all electricity bills, and set new goals for using renewable energy. NJBIA opposes the bill and its inflexibility to lower energy costs for ratepayers.

"The recent changes to the energy master plan set realistic goals and focused government policy on the most critical energy issues facing the state," Bluhm said. "Those changes should not be erased."

Bluhm noted that New Jersey's commercial and industrial users pay some of the highest electricity rates in the country. In 2010, more than one-fourth of the average electricity bill paid for government policies, not for the delivery of electricity.

"In New Jersey, electricity costs are simply too high, and it is effecting our economic competitiveness," Bluhm said. "Adding cost control to the goals of the energy master plan will pay dividends for ratepayers throughout the state."

"In this economy, government and businesses alike have a responsibility to scrutinize costs in all areas, including energy usage," Bluhm said. "The Societal Benefits Charge funds six different programs. We have a responsibility to ensure that every one of those programs is necessary and if not, to eliminate them."

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