

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, Oct. 30, 2017

Contact: Sam Norton
860-240-8579

BRIDGEPORT MOVES CLOSER TO BECOMING A NATIONAL MODEL FOR THE REUSE OF WASTE HEAT

Area lawmakers tout bipartisan budget's creation of a pilot program to establish the first of its kind district thermal heating loop for the city's downtown

The bipartisan \$41.3 billion state budget passed by the Connecticut General Assembly last week has moved the city of Bridgeport closer to becoming a recognized national leader in renewable energy. Budget implementer legislation – resulting from significant time and effort by Governor Dannel P. Malloy's office and administration, the Bridgeport delegation and legislative leaders from both sides – establishes a state pilot program for the development and construction of a combined heat and power facility that will provide waste heat for a thermal heating loop in downtown Bridgeport.

Bridgeport will become the first city in the United States to establish a municipal low temperature district thermal heating loop using cutting-edge technology already employed in Europe that has been shown to drastically reduce energy costs and the carbon footprint in urban areas.

Bridgeport's thermal loop will use a network of underground pipes to supply thermal energy produced by a fuel cell or combined heat and power facility for the supply of space heating and domestic hot water to Bridgeport's downtown buildings. The resulting lower cost heating produced with this reliable and environmentally friendly technology will be a significant feature in attracting commercial and residential tenants to a revitalized urban location.

The combination of the electrical generation facility and the thermal loop will represent a private investment of nearly \$130 million for downtown Bridgeport. The city is also slated to receive an additional \$3 million in property tax revenue annually once the project is fully operating.

“This legislation puts a national spotlight on Bridgeport as the first city in the United States to spearhead this innovative heating technology method. Not only will this pilot program increase the number of job opportunities available, but it will spur economic growth and attract new businesses to the region. This project would not have been made possible without the tireless work by the Bridgeport legislative delegation, Mayor Ganim's office, the governor's office, members of the Energy and Technology Committee and the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection,” said chairman of the Bridgeport legislative delegation, **state Rep. Jack Hennessy, D-Bridgeport.**

“Bridgeport has a unique opportunity to become a pioneer in the use of renewable energy. This project will not only reduce our carbon footprint, it will directly add millions of dollars to our tax base

and invite more residential and commercial development downtown through cheaper heating costs. This project stands to serve as a major catalyst for the renaissance of our downtown,” said **state Rep. Steve Stafstrom, D-Bridgeport**.

“The passage of this legislation is reflective of Bridgeport’s and the state’s push to create more renewable energy locally. For years, Bridgeport has taken the initiative to improve its air quality and decarbonize the atmosphere. This cutting-edge technology is the most cost-effective way to heat cities while minimizing environmental impact,” said **state Rep. Andre Baker, D-Bridgeport**.

“My delegation and I believe that this legislation is a critical step towards moving Bridgeport ahead of the game with renewable energy initiatives,” said **state Rep. Christopher Rosario, D-Bridgeport**. “This is certainly a step forward after we worked hard to get funding for this project. I am eagerly looking forward to the next phase.”

“We have been working to bring this cutting-edge job creating technology to Bridgeport for a number of years and I am pleased to see thermal loop energy options making progress,” said **state Rep. Ezequiel Santiago, D-Bridgeport**. “We are well on the road to increasing efficiency and decreasing the harmful environmental impact of current energy sources. I am hoping this is a starting point and a model for other municipalities to follow for a healthier environment.”

This project was initially passed as standalone legislation in June and received broad, bipartisan support in the Legislature. The governor, however, vetoed the bill in July. Following the governor’s veto, the Bridgeport legislative delegation entered into negotiations with the governor’s office, the Public Utility Regulatory Agency, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and ranking members of the Energy and Technology Committee to strike a compromise and authorize the project to move forward.

“I was pleased to play a part in the passage of this bill and am hopeful that the positive outcomes of this pilot will provide a path for the state to develop a cost effective, sustainable low-temperature heating loop program into our energy program. Innovation and pilot implementation is critically important to the development of cleaner, sustainable energy. As municipalities look for efficiencies in their energy usage and microgrid electricity generation becomes part of their sustainability plan, low-temperature thermal heating loops, utilizing the waste heat from this type of generation that saves natural resources and reduces costs, are another tool that benefits our tax and rate payers,” said **state Rep. Laura Hoydick, R-Stratford**.

“It was a challenging goal to achieve, so I commend my colleagues for their diligence and willingness to work across party lines and between the legislative and executive branch,” said vice chairman of the Environment Committee, **state Rep. Joe Gresko, D-Stratford**. “Once successful, I look forward to bringing the cutting edge green energy technology to Stratford.”

“It’s exciting to see that Bridgeport would be at the forefront of piloting this game-changing energy efficient technology here in the United States,” said **state Sen. Marilyn Moore, D-Bridgeport**. “Bringing with it an estimated \$130 million in privately-funded economic development and an additional \$3 million in property tax revenue annually, this project will be good for our city’s economy, good for the environment, and it will enhance the quality of life of Bridgeport residents.”

“We had our ups and downs trying to get this approved, but we fought hard to get this into the state budget for the Bridgeport community,” said **state Sen. Ed Gomes, D-Bridgeport**. “I will continue to fight for programs and policies that will enhance our city’s economy.”

This legislation furthers Connecticut's Comprehensive Energy Strategy by permitting a thermal energy transportation company in a high-density urban area to own and operate up to 10 megawatts of combined heat and power facilities. The facility will in turn supply its electrical output to United Illuminating under a long-term power purchase agreement and provide the resulting waste heat to a district thermal loop.

"The passage of this framework allowing the Bridgeport Thermal Heating Loop to move forward is a real game changer for not only the economic vitality of our cities, but our shared sustainable future. This is a very exciting development that could lead to substantial economic development in the future and can show the way for cities all over the world to reduce their carbon emissions and build a green future. I thank the Bridgeport legislative delegation and a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers for working hard with Governor Malloy's administration to come to a compromise that allowed this innovative new approach to urban heating and energy to move forward. It will put Connecticut on the international map," said **Bridgeport Mayor Joe Ganim**.

"On behalf of the BRBC and the greater Bridgeport business community in general, we are extremely pleased with the passage of this key legislation representing both the state legislature's strong support of Bridgeport's Thermal Loop project and to its commitment to the revitalization of Connecticut's urban economies," said **Mickey Herbert, president of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council**.

"We are thrilled to be moving forward under this new pilot program which has benefited from the strong support and involvement of the city, the governor's office, the Legislature and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. We now can continue to complete this exciting renewable project while working closely with Bridgeport communities and businesses," said **Dan Donovan, a principal at NuPower Thermal LLC**.

The recently approved budget proposal now heads to the governor's desk for further consideration. Once the budget is signed into law, supporters of the thermal loop project will work together with United Illuminating to start an approval process with state regulators which will allow the district heating pilot project to be constructed in the near future. Bridgeport has been recognized nationally and internationally for sustainability and innovation for the thermal loop project by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and by the Government of Denmark.

The legislation permits this pilot program to proceed on an accelerated schedule by requiring the electrical distribution company issue a Request for Proposal for the power purchase agreement by the start of 2018. The agreement will be submitted to the Connecticut Public Utility Regulatory Agency (PURA) for approval within 15 days of the parties' signing.

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