

UD-researched 'green' initiative becomes state law

5:11 p.m., July 2, 2007--John Byrne, Distinguished Professor of Public Policy and director of UD's Center for Energy and Environmental Policy, joined state Sens. Harris B. McDowell and F. Gary Simpson in Legislative Hall in Dover on Thursday, June 28, as Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner signed Senate Bill 18, which creates a Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU), into law.

The legislation establishes a state-supervised nonprofit organization dedicated to helping residents and businesses of the First State conserve energy and expand reliance on renewable energy sources through funds initially seeded by a \$30 million bond.

"The purpose of the SEU plan is to assist residents and businesses in becoming more energy efficient and in using renewable energy," Byrne said. "The plan will pay the difference between the costs of buying standard household appliances and those with more efficient energy ratings. Consumers signing on will be asked to share 33 percent of the energy savings with SEU over the next 3-5 years."

In a press conference held in the governor's office, Minner said that the green plan would help provide clean, less expensive energy and help to preserve the quality of life enjoyed by Delaware residents.

"Sen. McDowell has been tireless in his efforts to get this bill passed," Minner said. "I commend him for his foresight and innovative approach to this vitally important issue."

With its focus on all energy fuels, and the use of a market-based and market-driven approach to address energy efficiency, renewable energy use and energy conversion, S.B. 18 builds on similar initiatives in Vermont and New Jersey.

Services designed by SEU and delivered by competitively selected contractors include one-stop shopping for efficient appliances, energy audits and renewable energy for household use. The plan also includes financing for green buildings, clean vehicle incentives and critical information about cost-saving options.

"The signing of S.B. 18 and the creation of the SEU will enable us to move away from the old command and control approach of energy policy," McDowell said. "The SEU now makes Delaware the leader in sustainability and energy efficiency policy."

McDowell also lauded the efforts Byrne and a research team from UD that included environmental policy graduate students Rebecca Walker, College of Arts and Sciences, and Jason Houck, College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy.

A final report, compiled with research assistance from UD's Center for Energy and Environmental Policy, showed that by improving energy services, Delaware could save more than 30 percent in total energy use over the next eight years.

"Sen. Harris McDowell and the team from the University of Delaware have formulated a national model for delivery of renewable energy and energy efficiency and services that will benefit Delawareans in real terms, in their wallets as well as in their environment," Delaware Secretary of Natural Resources and Environmental Control John Hughes said.

Article by Jerry Rhodes
Photo by Kathy F. Atkinson



John Byrne (second from left), Distinguished Professor of Public Policy and director of UD's Center for Energy and Environmental Policy, joins state Sens. Harris B. McDowell (left) and F. Gary Simpson (right) in Legislative Hall in Dover on June 28 for the bill signing by Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner.