

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Connecticut Survey Finds Overwhelming Consumer Support for Choice and Competition in the Electricity Industry**

### *Competitive markets favored over more state oversight to lower electricity prices*

**Boston, MA – 4/30/10** – Survey results released today by the New England Energy Alliance (NEEA) finds that a compelling 88 percent of Connecticut consumers support having competition in the electricity industry. The survey also finds consumers strongly favor having the choice to buy electricity from alternative electricity suppliers in addition to utility companies.

This sentiment is in sharp contrast to legislation currently under consideration by the Connecticut General Assembly that would dampen competition in Connecticut’s wholesale and retail electricity marketplace which was established more than a decade ago along with four other New England States.

“These results show that a super majority of slightly more than 75 percent of consumers believe that competition among private companies is the best way to lower electricity prices, rather than creating greater state authority over the electricity industry,” said NEEA’s Executive Director Paul G. Afonso. “The findings offer important guideposts to the legislature regarding the opinion of ratepayers who are also voters.”

The survey also found that 75% of consumers favor maintaining a requirement that electric companies provide information to consumers on how to choose alternative electricity suppliers. The consensus is that consumers need more information rather than less on electricity choice and competition options.

A clear majority of consumers (83 percent) expressed preference for the current billing method of receiving one monthly electric bill, rather than two, if electricity is purchased from an alternative supplier – a change also considered this legislative session.

“The survey also found that 75% of respondents felt it was extremely important that the Legislature focus on job creation and economic development, while just 24% had the same feeling about additional regulation of the electricity companies. “The Legislature seems out of touch with the concerns of consumers,” said Afonso.

The telephone survey was performed for NEEA by Opinion Dynamics Corporation of Waltham, MA. Interviewing was conducted between April 14 - 21 among 241 registered voters (consumers) in Connecticut as part of a broader, region-wide survey. The margin of error on the Connecticut portion of the sample is  $\pm 6.3\%$

The question-by-question results are available on NEEA’s website.  
([www.newenglandenergyalliance.org](http://www.newenglandenergyalliance.org)).

**New England Energy Alliance, Inc.**

**Topline Results of Connecticut Survey Module – April 2010 Opinion Dynamics Corp.  
(Part of a broader region-wide energy survey)**

**(FOR QUESTIONS 30-40 ONLY CONNECTICUT RESPONDENTS. n=174)**

On a scale of “1” to “5”, where ‘1’ means “not important at all” and “5” means “extremely important”, please tell me how important it is that each of the following issues be acted upon by the Connecticut Legislature

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>1-Not important at all</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5-Extremely important</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
30. Job creation and economic development	4.53	4%	1	8	12	75	1
31. Lower taxes	4.15	4%	7	18	10	60	1
32. Improved public schools	4.24	6%	3	12	18	61	-
33. Increased public safety services	3.72	6%	12	22	22	36	1
34. Additional regulation of electricity companies	3.32	16	9	26	23	24	2
35. Electricity sales were opened to competition about ten years ago. As a result, you now have the option of buying electricity from your utility company or switching to one of over 30 alternative suppliers licensed to sell electricity in the state that compete on price and service. In general, do you strongly favor this system, somewhat favor it, somewhat oppose it, or strongly oppose it?							
Strongly favor						45%	
Somewhat favor						43	
Somewhat oppose						5	
Strongly oppose						4	
(Don't know/Not sure/refused)						3	

36. The Connecticut Legislature is considering a bill to create a state electric authority. It would be able to borrow money, build, own and operate electric generating plants and enter into contracts to buy electricity. The costs of such an authority would be funded by a combination of state-issued bonds, additional charges on electricity bills and new taxes. Some people say that buying electricity from a state-run authority is the best way to lower the price of electricity, while others claim that competition among companies in the private sector is the best way of lowering prices. Which of these positions is closer to your own?

Buying electricity from a bureaucratic state-run authority is best way to lower price	17%
Competition among private companies is best way to lower price	76
(Combination/Other)	5
(Don't know)	2

37. Some people say that a state-run electric authority that builds, owns and operates generating plants would require hundreds of new bureaucrats and the issuing of billions of dollars in new state debt—which are ultimately backed by taxpayers. Others say that electric generating plants built and operated by a state agency would create needed jobs and also save consumers tens of millions of dollars every year in lower electricity prices. Which of these positions is closer to your own?

State-run electric authority requires state bureaucrats and new state debt	32%
State-run electric authority creates needed jobs and saves consumers millions	53
(Combination/Other)	8
(Don't know)	8

38. Another bill under consideration by the Connecticut legislature would single out electric generating plants in our state for a new tax that is one of the highest in the state's history. Some people say that this legislation doesn't make any sense, since it punishes the same Connecticut plants that produce the cheapest electricity for consumers. Others say that this legislation does make sense because new taxes on electricity plants can help bring down electricity prices for consumers. Which of these positions is closer to your own?

Legislation doesn't make any sense, plants already produce cheapest electricity	53%
Legislation does make sense, tax can reduce price of electricity for consumers	33
(Combination/Other)	5
(Don't know)	9

39. The legislature is also considering eliminating the requirement that electric companies provide information to consumers on how to choose alternative electricity suppliers. Some support this bill because so many residential consumers have already switched electricity suppliers and that this information is no longer needed. Others say the bill should not pass because Connecticut residents and businesses will always need more information -- not less -- about their options for electricity choice and competition. Which of these positions is closer to your own?

Bill should pass, information not needed	20%
Bill should not pass, information still needed	75
(Combination/Other)	2
(Don't know)	3

40. Lastly, the Legislature is considering a bill that would require customers who buy electricity from a company other than the utility to get two bills, one from the company that supplies the electricity and another from the utility that delivers it. The current system allows customers to get one bill for both electricity and delivery charges from the utility. Which of these positions is closer to your own?

Prefer to be able to get one bill from the utility for electricity and delivery charges	83%
Prefer to get two bills, one for electricity and one for delivery charges	11
(No preference)	4
(Don't know)	1