

U.S. Sen. Chris Dodd's clean energy push unveiled at FuelCell

Saturday, February 27, 2010

By DAN IVERS

TORRINGTON — Sen. Chris Dodd stopped at the Torrington-based FuelCell company to unveil his plan to usher in a new era of manufacturing success for Connecticut before he leaves office.

Harkening back to the state and area's industrial successes gone by, such as Thomaston's clock factories and Hartford's Colt revolver plants, he announced an initiative to support the area's budding clean energy job market. He counted FuelCell, which produces efficient energy with minimal consumption of fossil fuels, as being among the companies that will be essential to the plan's success.

"There's no reason why we ought to give up on manufacturing," he said, saying that continuing to allow such jobs to leave the state would amount to "surrender."

"I happen to believe that fuel cells are what the world needs."

As he delved into specifics on his plan, Dodd said he would push the federal government to fund and support the movement toward fuel cells by installing the technology in its own facilities, especially those where solar panels or wind turbines are not feasible.

"This country used to get excited about beating other countries to new technologies," he said. "We need to get back to that."

In addition, he said the government should encourage private businesses to adopt the technology by increasing tax incentives it currently offers from 30 to 40 percent.

The third phase of the plan would be to push manufacturers and consumers to make the technology a part of powering more residences, with the goal of having 1 million homes utilize fuel cells by 2050.

Dodd said the results would go far beyond the creation of jobs in Connecticut and the restoration of its manufacturing industry, as the implementation of clean energy systems would reduce the country's dependence on foreign fuels, reduce its pollution rates and utilize more of the technology being made within its own borders.

Currently, many of FuelCell's products are purchased by foreign countries such as South Korea.

"You (FuelCell employees) are on the cutting edge of what we ought to be doing as a people," said Dodd.

FuelCell CEO Daniel Brdar thanked Dodd for his continued support and hoped his influence in Washington and Hartford would help see the plan through.

"With Chris Dodd's leadership, Connecticut has really established itself as a leader in clean energy technology," he said.

