



Consumer Counsel is Panelist at Energy, Environment, and Economic Development Conference



Tracy Babbidge, Kevin Hennessy & Elin Swanson Katz on March 11, 2015
Joseph Murphy Photography

On March 11, 2015, Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz was a panelist at Connecticut Power & Energy Society's Energy, Environment, and Economic Development Conference entitled "Energy Prices- How High and How Long Are They Going to Last?" Consumer Counsel Katz spoke on a panel about how environmental regulations impact energy costs. Other panelists included Tracy Babbidge, Bureau Chief of the Energy and Technology Bureau at the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and Kevin Hennessy, Director of State and Local Affairs for New England with Dominion Resources, Inc. Consumer Counsel Katz remarked on how the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) has been involved with DEEP's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), renewable procurements, and the three-state Request for

Proposals for clean energy resources initiated by Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. She also discussed the shift in energy sources used to produce electricity. Consumer Counsel Katz highlighted the “natural gas paradox,” which is that although natural gas is generally cleaner and cheaper than other fuel sources and has led to coal and oil plant disuse, on particularly cold days natural gas as a generation source can lead to increased electricity costs and reduced reliability due to the many homes and businesses that heat with natural gas. While the increase in natural gas electricity generation has been an overall positive for Connecticut and the region, the OCC supports diversity in energy sources. Finally, Consumer Counsel Katz explored how Connecticut’s Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) have changed and how they affect customer bills.

Keynote speakers at the conference included Marianne Bonnard, the Director of Public Affairs at the Quebec Government Office in Boston, who discussed Quebec as a strategic partner in helping New England meet its policy goals, and Nick Perna, an Economic Advisor at Webster Bank, who provided an economic perspective on energy issues in Connecticut. Other panels at the conference examined the drivers of electric prices in the region and where rates are going. For more information about the conference, click [here](#).