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**First Selectman Jim Marpe Renews Westport's Commitment  
to Environmental Responsibility**

Westport, Conn. -- First Selectman Jim Marpe announced that he has joined over 1,200 U.S. governors, mayors, businesses, universities and others in pledging the town to meet and exceed the goals of the Paris climate agreement. This specific pledge is sponsored by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) Cities organization, which the Town of Westport has been working with since 2015 to benchmark its carbon emissions.

“Westport has a proud and extensive legacy of environmental leadership, and we believe in doing what’s right for our residents and the environment,” stated Mr. Marpe. “In 2015, working with the Green Task Force, I announced a target of ‘Net Zero by 2050’ across energy, water and waste. The goal is to create a sustainable community--from economic, social and environmental perspectives--where future generations will choose to raise their families. As part of the commitment to the ‘Net-Zero by 2050’ action, we will be asking for the support of the RTM for this initiative.”

Over the last several years, the Town of Westport has taken a number of important steps to achieve its environmental stewardship goals:

- In 2006, Westport founded the Green Energy Task Force, a precursor to the current Green Task Force which inventories the community’s emissions and develops environmental action plans.
- In 2007, Westport was among the first towns in Connecticut to have a sustainability chapter in its Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).
- In 2012, Westport participated in the first CT Solarize program, during which residential solar panel use was more than doubled. Currently, Westport has over 140 residential solar cell systems, with potential for more.
- In 2013, Westport won a Department of Energy sponsored Home Energy Efficiency Challenge, in which Westporters completed more home energy assessments and upgrade measures than residents in the 13 other Connecticut towns that participated in the competition.
- In 2013, Westport pledged to reduce municipal building energy consumption by 20 percent by 2018.
- In 2014, Westport provided residents access to thermal imaging to promote energy efficiency improvements.

- Since 2015, Westport has reported its emissions to CDP Cities. CDP Cities (Carbon Disclosure Project) produces annual reports on what more than 500 cities worldwide are doing to anticipate, mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- In 2015, Westport's First Selectman, at the recommendation of the Green Task Force, adopted a policy goal to become a Net Zero community by the year 2050, and has integrated sustainability considerations into the town's budgeting process.
- Westport was one of the first CT towns to sign on to the C-PACE program (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) which allows building owners to finance qualifying energy efficiency and clean energy improvements through placing a voluntary assessment on their property tax bill. Earthplace, the Nature Discovery Center, was the first institution in town to take advantage of this opportunity, and has reduced its contribution of particulate emissions by 40%.

The Town of Westport's current initiatives to reach its Net Zero 2050 goals include reducing its impacts across energy, water and waste so that they are sustainably managed, using approaches that are economically viable, of social benefit, and environmentally responsible. Specific examples include:

- Signing an Agreement to receive electricity credit for 1 megawatt of solar power per year, produced at a site in eastern Connecticut. The town is waiting for approval for an additional 1 megawatt. This Virtual Net Metering program should satisfy roughly a quarter of the town buildings' electricity demand.
- Implementing the Energy Performance Contract initiative in our school and municipal buildings which will reduce overall energy consumption with the potential to save up to \$1 million per year in energy costs for the next 15 years.
- Installing electric vehicle charging stations at the Railroad Station parking lots and other municipal parking locations.
- Applying for an additional 1.2 megawatts of on-site solar power at Staples High School (just shy of 50% of the high school's electricity loads after a separate building efficiency improvement program).
- Preparing to break ground on an efficient renovation of the Westport Library including 70 kilowatts of solar power.
- Installing another 100 kilowatts of solar capacity as part of the planned expansion of the Center for Senior Activities.
- Initiating a new program with support of the Town, the Downtown Merchants Association and the Westport-Weston Chamber of Commerce, to encourage businesses to keep the doors closed this summer when using air conditioning.

The First Selectman concluded, "Westport is definitely committed to fighting climate change. We will continue to lead the way as we strive for the goal of Net Zero by the year 2050 across energy, water and waste."

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