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**SMITH: IN PULLING NJ OUT OF RGGI, CHRISTIE PULLS PLUG ON  
STATE'S MOVEMENT TO LEAD NATION IN CLEAN ENERGY**

TRENTON -- Senate Environment and Energy Committee Chairman Bob Smith (D-Middlesex) -- a sponsor of the legislation that entered New Jersey into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and a strong proponent of clean energy solutions -- released the following statement upon learning of Gov. Christie's decision to pull the state out of the regional carbon emission-cutting compact:

"Once again, the governor is showing how his unilateral, one-way decisions are narrowly tailored to maximize his short-term exposure before fawning national conservative leaders while shoving New Jersey's long-term interests aside.

"New polling data shows New Jerseyans overwhelmingly support the goals of RGGI -- investing in in-state clean energy solutions rather than lining the pockets of Big Oil. Residents want us bringing about real energy independence, not just talking about it. Absent the real economic incentives that RGGI could provide, the only incentives being dangled right now are to the oil interests and their suppliers in Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

"Our energy and economic futures are tied to harnessing the power and promise of solar and off-shore wind energy technologies. RGGI was the means to make those investments and those new jobs a reality. First, the governor emptied the RGGI jar to balance his budget, and now he's just thrown the entire thing away.

"New Jersey's energy future should rest on fostering independent and homegrown solutions. With his actions today, the governor has lowered the bar and tied us even tighter to the hip of Big Oil."