

## State launches next phase of energy plan

*Clearing away the infrastructure for rational policies.*

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The second phase of an ambitious plan to chart a course for Michigan's energy future was unveiled in Lansing by state Sen. Bruce Patterson Wednesday.

The Canton Republican, who chairs the Senate Technology and Energy Committee, said he was forming a technical working group to come up with long-range legislative solutions to Michigan's energy crunch.

Charged with drafting a report by June 10, the newly formed committee is expected to build on the successes of the first working group and address Michigan's energy concerns over two-year, 10-year and 30-year time frames.

Last month, Patterson's first working group authored a report that identified and defined the "critical elements" necessary to develop a long-range comprehensive energy plan for the state.

Though a list of participants won't be announced until next week, Patterson said he expects to have representatives from electric utilities, alternative energy producers and environmental organizations on the panel.

"My concern is that Michigan hasn't had a plan for nearly a quarter of a century," Patterson said. "When we're through, I want to be able to say we've stretched the horizon to see what all is out there, and we'll embark upon passing laws to get there."

While focused primarily on electric generation capacity, Patterson's group will also address related issues such as petroleum delivery, [nuclear power options](#), renewable fuel alternatives and other concerns.

"I'll be taking credentials and résumés to consider who will be on this group," he said. "Experts will be assigned to subcategories of like and compatible interests."

The nation's energy crunch, which has hit Michigan harder than most other states in terms of higher gas prices, has galvanized the attention of lawmakers, regulators and lobbyists in Lansing in recent months.

In January, the Michigan Public Service Commission issued a Capacity Needs Forum report detailing the state's electric generation needs for the future.

Then, last month, Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced her 21st Century Energy Plan in which she ordered MPSC Chairman Peter Lark to develop a comprehensive report to address Michigan's electricity needs. Lark has until Dec. 31 to complete the study.

"We're very pleased to see the Legislature engaged on this issue," said Liz Boyd, press secretary for Granholm. "The more discussion we have on this issue, the better it is for the long-term prospects for Michigan. We are developing our 21st Century energy plan."