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Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Conventions (CERC) Announces Efforts to Reduce Environmental Impact of Democratic National Convention

Boston, MA—June 17, 2004—The Boston-based Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Conventions (CERC) has announced a series of actions to reduce the environmental impacts associated with the upcoming Democratic National Convention in Boston. Similar efforts, following the Boston model, are underway with the Republican National Convention in New York.

“This summer’s conventions will showcase practices, products, and services that address pressing environmental problems such as global warming,” said Daniel Ruben, CERC executive director. “We are proud that the combined efforts of many individuals and organizations that participate in CERC have established a set of initiatives that set a new standard for political and other large conventions. The progress we have made is also a tribute to the cooperation we have received from Boston 2004 and the Democratic National Convention Committee.”

CERC has purchased \$11,000 of renewable energy certificates to match the electricity use at the Fleet Center during the four-day convention. Much of that energy will come from a 660-kilowatt wind turbine in nearby Hull, MA, the destination of a CERC boat tour for delegates during the convention. CERC has also bought energy from a wind farm in Colorado, a Connecticut hydroelectric facility and a landfill gas facility in California. These purchases enable the convention to boast that electricity use at the Fleet Center during the convention will not contribute to global warming.

“We believe that American political conventions should be powered by American-made renewable energy that doesn’t pollute American lungs, rely on imported oil or contribute to global warming,” said Ruben.

“CERC’s efforts to reduce environmental impacts and employ cleaner energy technologies isn’t just about minimizing waste and pollution,” said Kevin Knobloch, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). “CERC and its partners are showcasing best practices which, if widely adopted, would preserve and expand US-based jobs and make us less dependant on oil from unstable and undemocratic countries.”

Working with Shawmut Design and Construction, the contractor handling convention-related construction activity at the Fleet Center in Boston, CERC has helped bring about a cooperative agreement

that “green” building techniques be used for convention-related construction work at the Fleet Center. Shawmut is the main contractor readying the Fleet Center for the Democratic National Convention.

Additionally, CERC recently hosted a seminar for Boston-area hotels to educate them on cost effective “green” practices that they can implement before, during, and after the convention. Ten Boston-area hotels participated in the seminar hosted at Boston’s Lenox Hotel, a recognized leader in environmental innovation.

“From donating and composting leftover food, to purchasing renewable energy, to “greening” area hotels, this convention is providing a tremendous opportunity to educate delegates and the public on how services can be provided in ways that are both environmentally sustainable and economically sound,” said Ruben.

Ruben highlighted several other projects that are underway to “green” the convention, including:

- CERC has a contract with the MA Department of Environmental Protection to influence venues and caterers to divert their food waste to haulers who take it to licensed composting facilities.
- CERC is working with caterers and venues to include food from Massachusetts farms at convention events. Local food purchasing supports Massachusetts farms, maintains scenic open space, fights sprawl, and minimizes the environmental impact of transporting food over long distances.
- CERC is helping Shawmut reduce, reuse, and recycle construction waste through careful pre-planning, and finding markets for reusable products and recyclable materials. Many of the products will go to Boston’s ReStore and the Building Materials Resources Center after the convention ends.
- CERC is working with WalkBoston on a “Walk to the DNC” program to encourage delegates to walk to the Fleet Center. To highlight this effort, former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis and other opinion leaders will participate in walks with delegates.
- CERC is also working to green the convention by supporting innovative small businesses, such as PlanetTran, Boston's first and only airport shuttle service based exclusively on Hybrid cars, in their efforts to provide environmentally-responsible service for conventioners.

CERC is a non-partisan organization comprising organizations from the non-profit, commercial, and governmental sectors. Its mission is to minimize the “local and global environmental footprints” of large meetings, starting with the Democratic National Convention, and to create a legacy for future conventions. CERC has established a branch in New York to incorporate environmental best practices into the planning and operations of the Republican National Convention.

For more information about CERC’s initiatives and its series of special events at the Conventions, please call Daniel Ruben at (617) 527-7950, email him at dan_ruben@usa.net, or visit the CERC website, www.cerc04.org.