



BECKER+BECKER

MEMORANDUM

To: Energy & Technology Committee
From: Bruce Becker, Becker Development Associates, LLC
Re: Comments on Raised Bill 6635

My name is Bruce Becker, and I am the president of Becker and Becker Associates, an integrated architecture and development firm based in Fairfield. My firm is currently constructing a large transit-oriented, mixed-use development in downtown New Haven, which is designed to be a LEED-ND Gold project (called "360 State Street"). Our project will include a 400 kW fuel cell, for which we have received a grant from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund. In addition, we hope to someday install photovoltaic panels on the roof of the building, as we did with our last project, The Octagon, which has the largest photovoltaic array in Manhattan. As a developer committed to green technologies, I applaud the legislature's effort to expand access to clean energy in the state and see value in some of RB 6635.

While I support the goal of this legislation, I think this goal might be better achieved in two ways: (1) expanding existing, successful programs and (2) expanding net metering.

1. Expanding Existing Programs

I believe that the state should prioritize the expansion of existing programs that promote solar energy, such as the programs of the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF), instead of creating new utility-managed programs. In other words, RB 6635 might be better administered by the CCEF. Through my work on 360 State Street, I have had experience dealing with the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund and their programs to deploy distributed generation in the state. Every interaction with the CCEF has been precise and efficient. The agency's clearheaded leadership has successfully expanded distributed generation throughout the state using a process that is unencumbered by needless bureaucracy. If RB 6635 created a new program administered by the utilities in order to encourage the expansion of distributed generation, such a program would be a duplicative effort that would undermine the CCEF. Moreover, the administrative costs of a new program would ultimately be borne by ratepayers. Instead of developing a new program, it would be far more expedient to expand the resources available to the CCEF, especially as it relates to photovoltaic projects.

2. Expanding Net Metering

RB 6635 includes an expansion of the net metering legislation to allow for the excess utility credits to be applied to multiple accounts of charity organizations. I fully support this provision, and encourage the legislature to expand this credit to other non-profits, such as electric cooperatives.

In conclusion, expanding funding for distributed generation is a smart move, although I would urge you to reconsider which entity would best facilitate such an expansion. I would also suggest that you consider the impact of the administrative costs of a new program on the bills of already-strained ratepayers. Net metering regulations deserve to be re-examined, and the proposed changes are a step in the right direction. If I can provide any insight into the consumer's perspective regarding distributed generation please do not hesitate to contact me at 203.292.4900.