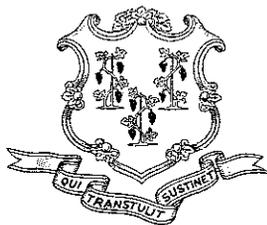


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State of Connecticut
SENATOR DONALD E. WILLIAMS, JR.
Twenty-ninth District
President Pro Tempore

Testimony of Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr.
Senate President Pro Tempore

On

House Bill 6635: AAC Solar Power
Energy and Technology Committee
March 10, 2009

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello and members of the committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of **HB 6635, AAC Solar Power.**

We are all well aware of Connecticut's high electric rates, as compared to other states, and the impact on residents and businesses. In 2007, this legislature passed Public Act 07-242, *An Act Concerning Electricity and Energy Efficiency*. Two of the key components of this important legislation was for the state to make a greater investment in renewable energy, and to encourage the use of energy efficiency programs and products by ratepayers. By educating ratepayers on the importance of reducing our electric demand, particularly during "peak" periods, we could help reduce demand, increase efficiency, and moderate or reduce cost.

It does appear that people today, more than ever, are aware of the impact of their energy usage. More people have decided to save money by swapping out their incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescents, buying *Energy Star* appliances, and replacing inefficient furnaces and air conditioners. There has been more interest than ever in using solar power, and researching financial incentives to put solar panels on the roofs of homes and businesses. Our citizens understand that their energy usage not only impacts their electric and heating bills, but, on a greater level, our nation's energy independence and our environment. The decisions we make today directly impact the future we create for our children and grandchildren.

We are also fortunate to finally have an administration in Washington, D.C. that believes that renewable energy will play a significant role in steering our country out of this economic recession. The Obama Administration strongly supports creating millions of new jobs by investing billions over the next decade to enhance private efforts to build a clean energy future, encourage the development of Plug-In Hybrid vehicles, ensure that a greater amount of our

electricity comes from renewable sources, and implement an economy-wide cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If enacted, these policies will work in conjunction with our state policies.

Although we are facing a budget deficit of epic proportions, we need to take this opportunity to ensure that Connecticut does not fall behind other states, particularly when it comes to investing in renewable energy and the creation of "green jobs." Connecticut has been on the forefront of investing in renewable energy, particularly in regards to its ratepayer clean energy funds. Our nationally recognized funds have created a number of renewable energy projects and attracted businesses to the state. With the current economic and budget crisis, we need to do everything possible to protect the programs that keep the "green" industry intact and attract more jobs and investments in renewable energy projects. HB 6635, *An Act Concerning Solar Power*, is a positive step in the right direction.

HB 6635 is a multi-pronged approach to bring more solar projects to our state. Solar energy produces no greenhouse gas or other pollution and photovoltaic panels have been used for decades. Solar energy generates more jobs per mega-watt-hour than any other renewable energy technology. According to the U.S. PV Industry Roadmap, each mega-watt of installed capacity supports 32 direct jobs. This legislation provides additional incentives for homeowners and businesses to install solar photovoltaic systems. It also allows utility companies to enter into long-term agreements with solar developers, and encourages the state, municipalities and nonprofits to use solar generating systems on buildings.

I look forward to working with all of you to create a viable, sustainable energy industry, developing additional green jobs, and increasing the number of homes and businesses that use renewable power in our state.

Thank you for your time.