INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS
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LOCAL 90

To the members of the Energy Committee,

My name is Sean Daly and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) in regards to Bill 5362 AAC Renewable Energy. We represent thousands of licensed electricians and indentured apprentices in Connecticut who work in the electrical industry.

We strongly support efforts to incentivize the growth of the renewable energy industry and green jobs, however we would like to raise awareness of some barriers we as electricians have experienced in our efforts to contribute to the growth of the solar industry and overall job growth in our state. Solar panels are not a new invention, they were invented in 1953 and gained the most prominence in 1973, and we have been installing them from the beginning. New technologies now make them more affordable and efficient. This bill speaks to the CT Clean Energy Fund's (CCEF) program to award rebates for the installation of Solar Photovoltaic panels. While we wholeheartedly appreciate the intent of the program and commend many of the CCEF's overall efforts to foster job growth in the "green" industry, we feel the requirements CCEF has set forth hinder the ability for our electricians to take advantage of the program. There are over 3,000 licensed electrical contractors with registered apprentice programs in the state of Connecticut who have all the licensing qualifications to perform these installations. There are already over 12,000 licensed people who can perform this work and over 1,760 registered apprentices learning this trade.

The IBEW feels the unlimited E1 and E2 licenses provide a more comprehensive background for those who are to perform the installation of Solar panels. The electricians go through a four-year training program, with annual continuing education, versus the PV apprentice program, which is only two years. We have been targeting Solar PV installations as a topic in our apprentice training courses for years. Therefore, not only are our electricians well versed in the techniques of Solar PV installations, they are also able to spot a related, though possibly unexpected, electrical mishap that may occur during the installation of the panels. We feel this is a matter of safety over anything else.

In Connecticut, there is a 30% unemployment rate in the electrical industry both union and non-union at this time. There are only a total of 29 PV licensed individuals doing work in the state, and some of them come from out of state. We are concerned about this given the high unemployment rate in our industry; our electricians are more than qualified to do this work and we hope you can help support us by helping to relieve employment barriers we are facing. We are ready and willing to be a partner in the renewable energy industry in Connecticut, and we ask that you help us along that path.

Thank you for your time and consideration in support of this bill.

Sean Daly