

**Testimony on Raised Bill # 5225
AAC Solar Work**

**Richard Dziadul
PV-1
NABCEP Certified Photovoltaic Installer
PV Squared
185 Main Street, Ste 202
New Britain CT 06051**

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Chairman Colapietro, Chairman Shapiro, Committee Members and Staff, I am here today to express my opposition to RHB # 5225.

My name is Richard Dziadul. I am a Board Certified Solar Installer. ¹ I have been a solar installer in Connecticut since 2004. I have supervised the installation of over 500 kilowatts of photovoltaics, over approximately 60 projects. I was among the first dozen installers in the State of Connecticut to be licensed as a PV-1 Solar Contractor.

As allowed by Connecticut law, I am now training an apprentice Solar Installer, who is with us here today, Seth Mellen. My company, PV Squared, is an electrical contracting business specializing in solar energy installations, based in New Britain Connecticut. We have on staff one E-1 electrician, one PV-1 professional, and one PV-2 apprentice.

I would like to start my testimony with a few statements that may be useful as you consider RHB #5225:

1. RHB #5225 seeks to make changes to the licensing and definitions that determine who can legally perform various aspects of a solar photovoltaic system. Instead of the word photovoltaics, it is referred to as "solar electricity work" in state statutes.

Under state regulations today, E-1 electrical contractors can install photovoltaic systems, just as holders of the PV-1 Solar Contractor license can install photovoltaic systems. This means that a large portion of RHB # 5225 is seeking to address a problem where none exists: there is no requirement to change current law in order to allow E-1 electricians to undertake this work.

If you look across the Solar Contractors currently authorized to install photovoltaics in Connecticut today, you will find many whose work is supervised by a PV-1 license holder; many whose work is supervised by an E-1

or E-2 electrician. Some, such as PV Squared, the company for which I work, combine the talents and skills sets of both PV-1 and E-1 license holders.

2. As a Solar Contractor, I install photovoltaic panels, or modules, that convert sunlight into electricity. Through use of equipment we call inverters, this electricity is modified in such a way that it can match, or interconnect, with the electricity provided by the local electric utility to a home or school or business. This ability to interconnect is part of what makes these systems simple and affordable to our customers, and to provide the added benefit of supporting the stability of the electrical grid in our state.

3. Connecticut Light & Power, and the other power utilities in the state, would not let us interconnect if they were not convinced that the systems we install are safe and reliable.

4. The State of Connecticut, through the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund, has been providing incentives to communities, to commercial business, and to residents of Connecticut, to make the installation of photovoltaic systems more affordable. In the past five years, approximately 18,000 kilowatts of photovoltaic capacity have been installed in our State.

I contend that this has all been accomplished under current state law in a safe and orderly manner.

5. In 2005, the Connecticut Legislature enacted the legal framework for the PV-1, Solar Contractors license. A reading of the testimony given at that time shows that it was the Legislature's intent to establish a trained workforce in the state dedicated to installing solar energy, and the means to make such installations affordable to the consumer.

Here is why I am opposed to RHB #5225:

It would kill green jobs. It would force photovoltaic installers in Connecticut to lay off workers, to close their doors, or to pull out of the state.

In 2005, the Legislature enacted a provision that allows us to hire employees to hoist, place and anchor solar modules in place, regardless of whether they hold a trade license related to such work. This is a reasonable measure which helps our industry hold down the cost of installations. RHB #5225 would eliminate this provision, and force the photovoltaic industry to hire more expensive, licensed individuals for this purpose (presumably, E-1 and E-2 electricians).

But that is not all. RHB 5225, by changing the wording regarding this trade license, would make my PV-1 license useless, as I would be unable to install systems that interconnect to the power grid. This change would put renewable energy installers such as myself out of work.

In the plain language of Section 2, RHB-5225 would direct the Department of Consumer Protection to issue work certificates for E-1 and E-2 electricians to do solar electric work, while failing to confer a similar directive for holders of the PV-1 or PV-2 license. Unless I am mistaken, this would have the effect of rendering my PV-1 license meaningless, and I would no longer be able to carry out my job duties.

Some might argue that this may cause an unfortunate disruption for current employees in my industry, but that there would not be a net loss of jobs, as more individuals with higher-skill licenses would be hired in their place. This is not the case. As I know from my experience in this industry, the customer is extremely sensitive to price, and any factor which significantly increases the cost of installation will decrease the volume of installations taking place.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

1. National Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP). This is a national certification organization. There are about 400 NABCEP Certified Photovoltaic Installers in the United States.