



GrowJobsCT

MANUFACTURING MAKES CT'S FUTURE

365 New Britain Road, Kensington, CT 06037
Phone: 860-828-0359 Fax: 860-828-9542

Testimony of John Harrity
Director, GrowJobsCT

Regarding Proposed Bill:

SB 1 – AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S ENERGY FUTURE

Energy and Technology Committee
March 2011

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, members of the committee: my name is John Harrity. I serve as Director of GrowJobsCT, a coalition of business, labor and community groups, along with elected officials, that focuses on the need to sustain and expand manufacturing jobs in the state of Connecticut.

I am here to speak about Senate Bill 1 – AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S ENERGY FUTURE.

The bill's commitment to renewable energy is admirable. But it is impossible to envision a major Connecticut renewable energy program initiative that does not include fuel cells.

There are experts here who can give you more precise information regarding specific attributes of Connecticut's fuel cell industry. But there are some general factors that I would point out, including some comparisons with solar energy.

The Navigent study and other sources show clearly that:

Both solar and fuel cells are Class I renewables in Connecticut, but fuel cells are a much more efficient producer of electricity, available for power production regardless of weather conditions.

Fuel cells produce power more cheaply than solar technology.

Because Connecticut has a unique concentration of fuel cell, hydrogen and supply chain companies, financial support for fuel cells creates eight Connecticut jobs for every three jobs the same investment creates in solar employment in the state.

80% of solar costs are in equipment, which means that state investment in solar exports tax dollars outside Connecticut, since little of that product is made here.

In contrast, investment in fuel cells not only stays to a large measure in our state, it helps bring down the price of the product, making it more attractive for utilization in other states and countries. This leads to funds being imported into Connecticut from other locations, further increasing employment.

Given these and other facts that show the importance of the fuel cell industry to Connecticut, I believe they have earned at least equal consideration by the legislature, and should be included in this bill.

- A “feed-in tariff” should be established, with declining subsidies over time, that applies to fuel cells principally manufactured in Connecticut.
- The amount of state support should be commensurate with that given to solar – which can be done in this bill by splitting the proposed funding between the two technologies.
- Utilities should be allowed to own fuel cell power production.

I am here today in part because my union, the Machinists, represent fuel cell industry manufacturing workers. Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, members of the committee – you represent fuel cell manufacturing workers too. It is unlikely that any of you come from districts with no fuel cell manufacturing employees.

It is also extremely unlikely that any of you represent solar energy manufacturing workers, or even have such a business in your district – because Connecticut has little solar manufacturing activity.

Funding solar will create more jobs in the area of solar installation work. That activity does nothing to build industry in the state, help achieve an exportable product that can bring revenues into Connecticut, or even achieve employment that will sustain itself once the state funding is gone. Once financial support is finished, solar installation activity will cease, until the next round of state or federal support.

Solar equipment manufacturing is not likely to leave Asia for Connecticut.

Unfortunately, passing such a large renewable energy bill while ignoring the state’s premiere renewable energy technology ultimately creates the conditions under which a major company will relocate out-of-state or out of the country – to a more supportive environment. Like South Korea, as an example.

Our state badly needs jobs with growth potential, making products that can be sold elsewhere while creating employment and revenues here. Fuel cell support, done on the same basis as solar support in SB1, can expand our state renewable portfolio, provide clean power cost-effectively, and help pull Connecticut out of its current recessionary morass.

Thank you.

John Harrity