

Paula Panzarella  
344 Norton Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
(203) 562-2798  
[paulapanzarella@yahoo.com](mailto:paulapanzarella@yahoo.com)  
March 15, 2011

Senate Bill 1 – An Act Concerning Connecticut’s Energy Future

To: The Energy and Technology Committee:

Thank you for drafting such a comprehensive energy bill as Senate Bill 1. It addresses many issues of concern for Connecticut residents and businesses. At the February meeting of Fight the Hike, a Connecticut citizens’ advocacy organization, we created our list of demands to present to you. I am pleased to see that many of those demands have already been incorporated into SB 1.

I commend you for your work to lower the high rate of electricity in Connecticut. SB 1 has established numerous ways to address the costs, and considering that 40% of UI customers are in arrears, your work to lower rates is very welcome to many people. Last week I saw a graphic example of how Connecticut costs compare to other states. An electric bill from North Attleboro, Massachusetts for 500 kilowatts of electricity is \$68. My bill in New Haven for 498 kilowatts was \$112.

For too long, oversight and accountability over the energy system in Connecticut has been lacking. This bill establishes DEEP’s responsibilities and gives guidelines for programs and agencies to be monitored.

The four goals of DEEP (reducing rates and decreasing costs for ratepayers, ensuring a reliable and safe energy supply, increasing Connecticut’s use of clean energy and creating jobs and developing the energy related economy) go a long way to addressing the needs of Connecticut’s citizens.

There is much to say about this extensive bill, but I will limit my comments to a few sections.

Sec. 48 and 49 - It is extremely important that SB 1 requires DEEP to develop the Integrated Resources Plan. When I, along with other Fight the Hike members, first spoke with Energy and Technology members (January, 2007), it seemed that the State of Connecticut set itself into the proverbial “fox guarding the henhouse” mode by allowing the electric companies themselves to develop the IRP. The electric companies want to sell as much electricity as possible. As corporations, they are accountable to their shareholders. DEEP, as a government body, is accountable to the people of Connecticut, and will develop the IRP accordingly.

Sec. 50 - Establishing a discounted rate for electric company customers is vital for many people in our state, particularly in the urban areas, and by encouraging the households to agree to have a home energy audit as a prerequisite to qualification, there is the added assurance that the homes of lower-income people will become more energy-efficient.

Sec. 57-63 promotes an array of solar incentives and projects. Sec. 61 specifically calls for projects to be located on brownfields or other locations in targeted investment communities. This can go a long way in lessening the current "sustainability disparity" between the "haves" and the "have-nots."

Sec. 70 - Regarding energy efficiency in poor municipalities: this not only refers to Clean Energy Fund and the Energy Conservation and Load Management Fund, but also stipulates the money must be used for programs directly benefiting the municipalities and includes a job training component. Many of us in Fight the Hike are concerned that so many projects funded by the CT Clean Energy Fund and the CT Energy Efficiency Fund are for major corporations (Pilgrim Furniture, Staples, Kohl's, etc.) and people of great wealth. Although we are glad that big businesses and people of great wealth want to switch to renewable energy and become more energy efficient, we feel the funds should primarily be given to people who don't have large incomes. Otherwise, you create a situation where poor inner-city people pay the extra fees on their bills that end up subsidizing corporations and the wealthy. Sec. 70 is pointing in the right direction for assisting those who need conservation and clean energy funds the most.

I urge all members of the Energy and Technology Committee to vote in favor of this bill so that your colleagues in the General Assembly will have the opportunity to vote it into law.

Thank you.

Best regards,



Paula Panzarella  
on behalf of Fight the Hike