

Written Testimony of Rich and Sharon Vocke of Evergreen Energy, LLC
before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology
Committee, March 15, 2011 concerning SENATE BILL 1, AN ACT
CONCERNING ENERGY POLICY AND FINANCE.

Rich and Sharon Vocke are the founders and co-owners of Evergreen Energy located in Southington, CT. Evergreen began in 2006 and provides solar PV, solar thermal, small wind and geothermal services to residential and commercial customers in Connecticut. Despite our expertise and qualifications in the solar field, we have only completed a few solar projects over the past six years. We have been kept in business primarily by completing geothermal projects, which tend to come along when the price of fuel oil increases.

The state of Connecticut needs a continuing funding source for commercial solar projects. Connecticut needs an incentive program for solar generation in the form of Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) or a feed-in-tariff. Something more substantial than the one-time incentives from the state or federal government (some of which will expire in 5 years or less) is needed.

Virtual net metering has been done successfully in other states; we do not need a small pilot program in Connecticut as this approach has already proven its worth. We need a functioning net-metering program now. Evergreen has had several interested developers contact us in the past concerning virtual net metering and we have been unable to help them because CT lacks appropriate legislation.

After six year in business, Sharon Vocke had to return this year to a previous teaching career because our business could no longer afford to employ two persons. Evergreen will not be able to hire a single employee until the renewable market in Connecticut is much further along and well established. We hope to hire many employees when legislation provides much needed incentives that will endure. We support the solar and other renewable energy expansion provisions of Senate Bill No. 1 to that end.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

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