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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Energy and Technology Committee
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Testimony on Parts of
SB 839, SB 1037, HB 6360, HB 6530, HB 6531, HB 6533, HB 6535

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

This committee will be considering a wide range of energy issues in 2013. Before commenting on specific bills on today's agenda, The Sierra Club wants to be clear about our priorities as we engage in this enterprise to craft our energy policy for the coming decades.

Efficiency

- Ensure all possible efficiency upgrades are available and feasible for all classes of energy users, and ensure funding is available to accelerate early adoption
- Maximize net metering opportunities for farmers and others regardless of any impact on the EDCs
- Require efficiency upgrades first in order to qualify for state incentive payments, such as for conversions to natural gas
- Prioritize available funding for efficiency upgrades for oil heat customers
- Promote building efficiency upgrades through rating and disclosure, benchmarking, financial incentives, and immediate adoption of new building codes
- Ensure early adoption of new building energy codes

Renewables

- Identify and remove all barriers to installation of renewable generation
- Prevent inclusion of energy sources to RPS Class I which would compete with existing sources, such as large hydro
- Reject efforts to add sources to the RPS advanced for non-energy related purposes
- Utilize long term contracts to maximize renewable energy opportunities for the state
- Ensure RGGI caps are kept low enough for the program to achieve its goals

Fuel Choices

- Finance expansion of natural gas infrastructure such that ultimate conversions to renewable energy are not retarded by stranded costs
- Work cooperatively with PSEG to close the Bridgeport coal plant as soon as feasible
- Ensure a fuel neutral policy for all programs
- Give preference to fuels which create minimal greenhouse gases
- Provide no support in any way for nuclear power

Transport

- Promote TOD in order to minimize transportation energy
- Invest in infrastructure for electric vehicles

The Sierra Club offers these specific comments on bills on the hearing agenda. Sierra approves of each unless otherwise noted.

6360 AAC Implementation Of Connecticut's Comprehensive Energy Strategy

Sec. 2 adds plan for conservation of water resources. Water conservation is very important, but water needs its own comprehensive plan crafted by a range of stakeholders.

Sec. 6 Allows more extensive submetering, which will allow a customer in a submetered unit to monitor his energy consumption.

Sec. 10-16 requires energy benchmarking for commercial, residential and state owned buildings.

Sec 18. Accelerates the cap on sulfur in heating oil, and makes CT independent of the caps from other states.

839 AAC Statutory Changes To Advance Connecticut' Energy Policies

Sec. 3, 5 and 7 provide that PURA rulings must follow DEEP and state energy policies.

1037 AAC The Procurement Plan, Integrated Resources Plan And Comprehensive Energy Strategy And Minor And Technical Revisions To The Utility Statutes

Sec. 1 provides that PURA must be guided by state plans, as in SB 839.

Sec. 16 adds ductless heat pumps to the list of equipment eligible for residential financing.

6530 AAC Development Of Connecticut-based Renewable Energy Sources

PURA should open a docket about developing CT based renewable energy sources.

6531 AA Preserving And Retaining The Environmental Benefits Of In-state Resources Recovery Facilities (Oppose)

Trash to Energy facilities address solid waste disposal, not energy, issues. They have manifold environmental consequences, such as CO₂ emissions beyond even coal plants. Sierra is well aware of the financial difficulties facing municipalities, especially with the budget shortfalls of 2013. However, compromising our renewable energy policy is not an acceptable way to address this problem. Sierra opposes this bill. A far better solution to municipal waste would be moving as quickly as possible towards a Zero Waste policy and practice.

6533 AAC Hydraulic Fracturing

Sierra agrees that import of fracking wastes for disposal in Connecticut should be banned. We also strongly urge that a moratorium or ban on fracking in the Hartford Basin and elsewhere in the state should be imposed until the legislature finds that science has shown that the practice is environmentally safe.

6535 AA Redefining Class I Renewable Energy Sources

Sierra strongly supports anaerobic digestion of organic wastes, which produces methane for energy and fertilizer quality wastes with no significant environmental consequences. Sierra recommends it be assigned RPS Class II recs so as to not compete with wind and solar.