

Written Testimony of Judith Allen

Before the Connecticut Assembly Energy and Technology Committee March 19, 2013 Written Testimony
Concerning Bill 1138 AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S CLEAN ENERGY GOALS.

I am a resident and voter in West Hartford, CT. I am part of the Inter-Religious Eco-Justice Network and the National Climate Ethics Campaign. As a person of faith, I care deeply about the health and wellbeing of all. I care deeply that we must do quickly what ever we can to help slow the climate crisis we face. Extreme weather is happening at a greater pace and with greater intensity than scientist had predicted. It is therefore important that we speed up efforts to reduce energy use and develop alternative sources of energy that are local, sustainable, and renewable.

This bill is complicated and far reaching. A study regarding the RPS is not available yet and this bill was supposed to be informed by that study. My comments are based on my own reading of this complex bill.

Bill 1138 appears to slow our progress toward meeting these important goals. The bill would weaken the Class I Renewable Portfolio Standards and opens the door to hydroelectric power source in Canada.

Canadian Hydro diverts local of energy sources such as solar. The CT solar industry is poised to implement solar projects, provide jobs, improve our economy. With support from the Renewable Portfolio Standards this industry could grow.

Energy from Canadian Hydro would have to be brought into New England, requiring powerful transmission lines, crossing Vermont and New Hampshire, both states have strong opposition to this.

The source of this Canadian hydroelectricity is a damn in Quebec which flooded the lands belonging to some Canadian First Nation Peoples. This project has had controversy from the very start. The cost of our energy is not just financial. The cost in environmental degradation, displacement of people, our moral obligations are part of the equation.

This bill appears to dilute the Class I RPS in other ways as well. Not only would it pave the way for Canadian Hydro, it changes requirements for any hydro electric power generation. It eliminates the need for a plant to be run-of-river and increases the amount of power generation allowed from 5 megawatts to 35 megawatts. These changes permit larger, more invasive power plants. Class I renewable portfolio should be safeguarding our waterways, aquatic life, and recreational access to

our waterways.

Bill 1138 appears to set new standards for our RPS, so that in the year 2020, our current goal of 25% is cut to 20%. It also mandates that a certain percentage of the total energy sources be met by using "contract tier renewable energy source", a standard that includes Canadian Hydro. So in the year 2020, 4.5% of that 20% must come from power sources like Canadian Hydro. This ensures that an industry and power source from outside our country continues to make profits here.

It also appears to change standards going backward. The current regulations fine electric suppliers who fail to meet their required RPS for each year. This bill appears to roll back the standards to 2006, allowing electricity providers to include up to 3% of their Class I renewable energy production to be Class II energy. This strikes at the heart of the meaning and spirit of the Class I portfolio standards, allowing providers to avoid penalties for past in-compliance.

In West Hartford, our students in middle school and high school take part in challenges to reduce energy use. They learn about energy sources from the sun and wind. West Hartford has been able to put solar panels on several town buildings and schools and we are proud of what we are doing to reduce our energy consumption and foster clean energy sources. We could do much more in West Hartford if investments were made in the solar industry and bring costs down.

The direction CT takes in setting standards for renewable energy has implications in places we do not see. Our recent extreme weather events should be a wake-up call that we need to do more, not less. This is not just a matter of dollars and cents. The cost of the decisions we make affect the lives of others. We should be challenging ourselves with even higher standards, not finding ways to put off change or find loopholes. We have a responsibility to set standards that are in harmony with values that promote the health, wellbeing, safety, and future for all.

Bill 1138 appears to do none of that.

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