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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps, Environment Connecticut State Director
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee

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Supporting:

HB 6838, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO RESIDENTIAL RENEWABLE ENERGY

SB 928, AN ACT CONCERNING SHARED CLEAN ENERGY FACILITIES

HB 6995, AN ACT CONCERNING A RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM

HB 7009, AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRIC AND ZERO-EMISSION VEHICLES

Opposing:

HB 6940, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SHARED CLEAN ENERGY FACILITY PILOT PROGRAM

SB 1074, AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL TAX ABATEMENT FOR NATURAL GAS EXPANSION

SB 140, AN ACT REQUIRING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY TO INITIATE A DOCKET REGARDING RATEPAYER SAVINGS UNDER RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAMS

Commenting:

HB 6022, AN ACT CONCERNING THERMAL ENERGY TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES IN THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT

HB 6532, ACT CONCERNING THE BRIDGEPORT THERMAL LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Senator Doyle, Representative Reed, and members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

My name is Chris Phelps, I am State Director for Environment Connecticut. We are a nonprofit environmental advocacy organization working to protect Connecticut's air, water, and natural landscape. We appreciate this opportunity to offer testimony concerning a number of the bills before you today that impact Connecticut's environment, economy, and clean energy future.

Global warming-fueled climate change is altering the face of our planet. The climate we experience today is very different from that of our grandparent's time. Temperatures are warmer, storms are more powerful, and coastal flooding is increasing, to name just a few impacts that we have seen right here in Connecticut.

Carbon pollution from the burning of coal, oil, and gas is the main cause of global warming and climate change. Without quick action to dramatically cut that pollution, the world in which we and our children live in coming years will become increasingly inhospitable and dangerous.

The good news is that our economy has begun to turn away from fossil fuel-dependence. As prices of oil, coal, and natural gas continue their inexorable rise, the costs of wind and solar power have plummeted in recent years. At the same time, the amount of new solar and wind electric generation capacity being built has begun to eclipse fossil fuels. As an example of this progress, the amount of solar power generation in Connecticut has grown nearly 50% annually over the past 4 years. If policymakers take action to maintain that rate of growth, within ten years Connecticut will get 20% of its power from solar.

HB 6838:

Environment Connecticut strongly supports Governor Malloy's proposal in HB 6838 to support construction of 300 megawatts of new residential solar power generation in Connecticut by 2022.

HB 6838 builds upon the very successful residential solar programs enacted as part of Public Act 11-80. That legislation was prompted by a then-urgent need to end the previous "boom-bust" cycles that had hamstrung growth of solar power in Connecticut. PA 11-80 established a 30MW goal for new residential solar installations and set a modest target date of 2022 to achieve that goal. As solar installations have grown quickly in Connecticut, so has the solar industry. Since 2011, solar companies have created hundreds of new jobs in the state. The success of these programs – beating the target by many years, clearly shows both the economic opportunity of, and consumer demand for, residential solar in Connecticut.

HB 6838 will position Connecticut's residential solar programs to achieve near 10-fold growth within seven years, support continued growth of solar industry jobs in Connecticut, and help keep the state on pace to get as much as 20% of its power from solar within 10 years.

SB 928:

Environment Connecticut supports SB 928, which would create a shared clean energy program enabling utility customers who rent their homes or businesses, and therefore cannot install solar or other distributed renewable energy sources on their property, to invest in, and benefit from, renewable energy.

The Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) recently completed a comprehensive report, *Shared Clean Energy Facilities*, which outlined a suggested policy approach to implementing shared clean energy in Connecticut. We support the findings of that report and encourage the committee to incorporate and align its recommendations within SB 928.

HB 6995:

Environment Connecticut supports the goals of HB 6995, which would extend Connecticut's successful Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program to include residential properties. Establishing a residential PACE (R-PACE) program, could powerfully complement and enhance Connecticut's existing efforts to remove barriers to homeowner investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Indeed, experience in California has shown a well-designed R-PACE program can result in significant adoption of clean energy by homeowners.

We support recommendations submitted by PACENow concerning design of a residential PACE program in Connecticut. Specifically:

- R-PACE liens should be senior to other debt on the property.
- Improvements financed should be qualifying energy (efficiency and clean energy) improvements, and be permanently installed on the property.
- Consumers should be provided with clear disclosure of any financial risks associated with a PACE program.
- Administration of the program should be conducted by the CT Green Bank.
- Participating properties should be located in municipalities that have agreed to collect PACE assessments.

HB 7009:

In 2004, Connecticut passed the Clean Cars Law, joining other states that enacted clean car emissions standards that have played a significant role in driving mass-adoption of highly fuel efficient gas, hybrid-electric, and electric vehicles. Increased consumer demand for such vehicles over the last decade has reduced dependency on oil, saves drivers money at the pump, and cuts emissions of carbon pollution from vehicle tailpipes. Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEV's), such as plug-in hybrid and electric vehicles, are the newest, most fuel-efficient, least polluting vehicles currently available to consumers.

Getting more ZEVs on the road is one of the most important steps Connecticut can take to achieve the carbon-pollution cuts required by PA 08-98, the Connecticut Global Warming Solutions Act. In 2014, Connecticut and 7 other states produced an [action plan](#) committing to get 3 million ZEVs on the road by 2025.

HB 7009 would establish a suite of policies to help the state meet its commitments and help pave the way for widespread consumer adoption of electric vehicles.

HB 6940:

Environment Connecticut opposes HB 6940. This bill would establish a limited pilot shared clean energy program. We believe there is no need for Connecticut to limit shared clean energy to a pilot project given the comprehensive assessment of the policy recently conducted for the General Assembly by the CT Academy of Science and Engineering that recommends against such a pilot program.

Shared solar and clean energy programs are already operating successfully in, and benefiting the economy and environment of, 10 other states. Connecticut has expended significant time and effort assessing this policy in recent years. HB 6940 would kick the can further down the road and cause Connecticut to be left further behind in development of job-creating renewable energy generation.

SB 1074:

Environment Connecticut is concerned that this legislation appears to mask some of the economic costs of natural gas infrastructure expansion by shifting those costs away from utilities and onto local property taxpayers. By so masking the true economic cost of natural gas expansion, this legislation could encourage unnecessary and unaffordable increases in fossil fuel consumption instead of energy efficiency and renewable energy.

SB 140:

Environment Connecticut opposes SB 140. This proposal appears based upon an assumption that renewable energy generation only carries economic costs for consumers and provides no economic, societal, or environmental benefits. This assumption flies in the face of the facts, and is contrary to numerous laws enacted in Connecticut over the past two decades that have helped our state establish a leadership role creating new jobs in clean energy industries, building new renewable energy, and reducing the carbon pollution that fuels global warming.

Rather than second-guess Connecticut's commitment to reducing carbon pollution and growing our renewable energy economy, the committee should reject SB 140.

HB 6022 & 6532:

Environment Connecticut wishes to express our concerns regarding HB 6022 and HB 6532. Specifically, it is our understanding that these bills originated in efforts to qualify a proposed thermal energy project in Bridgeport for "Class I" renewable electric generation (RPS) credits. That proposal would undermine the integrity and effectiveness of the Class I RPS tier and should be rejected.

At this time, we have taken no position for or against the proposed project in Bridgeport, and as such we do not oppose efforts to direct DEEP or PURA to study the issue and produce recommendations. But, we would oppose any effort to classify proposed thermal energy projects in Bridgeport (or elsewhere) as Class I renewables.

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Environment Connecticut