

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY (PURA)

Public Hearing – March 17, 2015

Energy and Technology Committee

Testimony Submitted by Arthur House A. House, Chairman, Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA)

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding several bills.

PURA welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

Raised Bill No. 1050 - AN ACT CONCERNING ABANDONED ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITIES AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Generally, the proposed legislation requires the owner of an abandoned electric generating facility that is subject to Siting Council jurisdiction to file a decommissioning plan with PURA after the facility is retired. PURA is then required to order the decommissioning to be accomplished within a one or two year time frame, as applicable, without the possibility extension. The legislation provides for a civil penalty to be imposed for non-compliance.

PURA opposes this legislation. Essentially all of PURA's jurisdiction over electric generating facilities was removed by Public Act 98-28, An Act Concerning Electric Restructuring (The Act). PURA has had no oversight or involvement with electric generating facilities since they were divested pursuant to provisions of the Act, approximately 15 years ago. PURA has no mechanism to keep informed of the condition or status of electric generating facilities, and staff expertise in this area has been lost over that time. PURA also has no other jurisdiction over the owners of the vast majority, if not all, such facilities, making PURA a very poor jurisdictional fit for this responsibility.

PURA also points out that the legislation builds upon a Siting Council statute and applies it to PURA, which is not proper statutory construction. The legislation appears to extrapolate experience with large, contaminated central power stations to all facilities certified by the Siting Council. In some cases, most notably hydroelectric facilities, such facilities are heavily federally regulated. Decommissioning of such facilities must follow a defined federal process and are unlikely to meet the mandated deadlines. PURA believes that, if enacted, the responsibilities should not be designated to PURA but to another, more appropriate, agency, and that the generating facilities of concern should be narrowed.

House Bill No. 6022 - AN ACT CONCERNING THERMAL ENERGY TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES IN THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT

House Bill No. 6532 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE BRIDGEPORT THERMAL LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

It is PURA's understanding that what the Bridgeport Thermal Limited Liability Company is seeking is to have their project classified as a Class I renewable energy source.

Regarding the specific bills, PURA **cannot support** these two proposals as they lack any details and direction regarding what the purpose, objective, deliverables and exceptions are for either the "study" or the "Docket". In addition, PURA cannot determine what the fiscal impact would be on PURA and whether we have the expertise in house to conduct whatever study the proponents of the bills have in mind.

Raised House Bill No. 6983 - AN ACT CONCERNING AGRICULTURAL CUSTOMERS AND VIRTUAL NET METERING

We appreciate the Committee's willingness to raise and hold a public hearing on House Bill No. 6983 – An Act Concerning Agricultural Customers and Virtual Net Metering.

This proposal, which PURA proposed and **strongly supports**, would set agricultural customer hosts on a par with state and municipal customer hosts. Currently, state and municipal hosts can own, lease or contract for virtual net metering facilities. Agricultural hosts, however, can only own facilities. PURA's proposal allows agricultural customer to host own, lease or contract for facilities. PURA came across this issue while developing its recently issued decision concerning the implementation of VNM in Connecticut. See PURA's Final Decision in Docket No. 13-08-14RE01 – PURA Development of the Administrative Processes and Program Specifications for Virtual Net Metering Methodology.

Raised House Bill No. 6985 - AN ACT INCREASING NATURAL GAS TRANSPORTATION CAPACITY

PURA believes that state action is necessary and justified in developing strategies, policies and actions to support infrastructure necessary to secure more reliable and affordable electricity on behalf of ratepayers. These actions can occur through coordination and accommodation with other New England states and should be accomplished through a competitive procurement process.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Nick Neeley, PURA's legislative liaison, at 860-827-2625 or Nicholas.Neeley@ct.gov.