



Dan Hendrick
Director of External Affairs, NRG
dan.hendrick@nrg.com
(917) 207-8715

**Testimony before the Energy and Technology Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
March 17, 2015**

Thank you to Chair Doyle, Chair Reed and the members of the Energy and Technology Committee for holding today's important hearing. NRG is pleased to provide this testimony on the subject of shared renewables (*SB-928: An Act Concerning Shared Clean Energy Facilities* and *HB-6940: An Act Establishing a Shared Clean Energy Facility Pilot Program*).

NRG is one of the largest renewable energy developers in the United States. Last year, we opened our NRG Home Solar office in Middletown and since then have become one of the largest solar installers in Connecticut. A cleaner environment is key to our business and our CEO, David Crane, recently committed NRG to reducing our companywide carbon emissions 50 percent by 2030 and 90 percent by 2050.

Despite the steadily increasing consumer demand for renewables that we are seeing, only a fraction of Connecticut households currently qualify for rooftop solar. All too often, roofs are too small or too shaded or they face the wrong direction to make solar economically viable. Many homeowners don't want solar panels on their roofs for aesthetic reasons, while others live in condominium complexes or don't have the credit scores needed to finance an installation. Out of the total 125 million households in the United States, NRG estimates that only 36 million are eligible for rooftop solar.

For this reason, NRG strongly supports a full-scale shared renewables program such as the one proposed in SB-928.

In addition to democratizing clean energy and increasing the number of Connecticut households that would be able to have a solar option by the hundreds of thousands, a strong shared renewables program will help the state meet its environmental goals and create jobs across the state.

We need look no further than our neighboring Commonwealth of Massachusetts to see that the economic benefits of shared renewables are deeply compelling. Since the creation of its shared renewables program last year, Massachusetts has added 3,000 solar jobs – an increase of 50 percent compared with the year before. Massachusetts now ranks second in the entire country for solar jobs, behind only the much-larger State of California.

On the heels of this long and cold winter, it is also important to note that a shared renewables program would go a long way toward stabilizing customer bills. Instead of bills that fluctuate with commodity prices and the capacity of the region's pipeline system, customers would be guaranteed a stable, predictable price of energy that will allow them to plan their household's finances and to save money.

Over the next 20 months, NRG expects to substantially increase our investments in long-term solar projects with our customer partners. Those investments will grow even more if Connecticut unlocks the economic and job-creating potential of shared renewables.

But time is of the essence. Federal incentives expire at the end of next year and Connecticut risks losing out if just the small pilot-scale program such as the one envisioned in HB-6940 is adopted.

Massachusetts and other states have already proved that a full-scale shared renewable program works. Competitive, private-market solutions were keys to success in those states, as were the partnerships between renewables developers and the regulated utilities.

With a full-scale program such as the one set forth in SB-928, along with a similar spirit of collaboration from all sides, Connecticut can join the ranks of states with the most innovative shared solar programs in the country.

Thank you.