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Subject: SB 928 - An Act Concerning Shared Clean Energy Facilities

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To the Energy and Technology Committee:

SB 928 will go a long way to address the disparity of solar energy distribution in the State of Connecticut. Although all ratepayers are charged to add to the funds for promoting clean energy projects, only a fraction of residences can take advantage of the technology and programs. People whose houses that do not have prime southern exposure, houses with old roofs, houses surrounded by trees and people who live in condos are not candidates for getting solar panels. Renters cannot put solar on the houses they live in, nor can people who can't afford it or have insufficient credit for leasing. Yet everyone pays into the system to help subsidize this clean energy industry, enabling well-off people and corporations to benefit. SB 928 will open up the availability for many more people to move towards clean energy.

Ten states have developed a shared renewable policy. In New England, we would be following the path of Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. In addition, fifty-two renewable projects are in seventeen states. The advantage of shared renewable facilities has been established in other parts of the country and Connecticut should embrace this as a policy to make renewable energy available to all.

Clean renewable energy is a concern of everyone. Especially in the inner-cities, we are already living with an overload of pollutants, asthma and automobile exhaust. Shared clean energy facilities would allow city-dwelling low-wage earners to have access to clean energy and take advantage of the programs just as well-off people can. It is only fair. Since everyone pays into the funds to help subsidize the programs it is right that everyone should be able to reap the benefits.

In addition, this will be a tremendous economic boon for the local manufacturing of renewable products and the training and employment of solar technicians and electricians in Connecticut. This legislation will promote the growth of Connecticut's solar and renewable businesses that have sprung up in the past decade.

Since 2007, members of Fight the Hike have given testimony at Energy and Technology public hearings about the need for clean, renewable, affordable energy for inner-city residents and businesses and for low-income ratepayers and renters. This possibility of Connecticut developing shared renewables will go a long way towards addressing the environmental injustice of the rich having solar panels that are subsidized in part by the poor. We all want to live in a healthy, clean society, and allowing more people to move away from fossil fuels is a great step towards that.

Thank you.

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on behalf of Fight the Hike

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