



**State of Connecticut**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
STATE CAPITOL

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APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

**Testimony**

**H.B. 5107 An Act Concerning Residential Solar Photovoltaic Installations**  
**Public Safety and Security Committee**  
**February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Chairman Senator Larson, Chairman Representative Dargan, Ranking Member Senator Guglielmo, Ranking Member Representative Zupkus and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify and offer written testimony in support of HB 5107 An Act Concerning Residential Solar Photovoltaic Installations.

I am here today to speak to you about a matter of safety concerning the brave firefighters in our state. While Connecticut citizens continue to benefit the environment and save on electricity costs by installing solar panels in their homes or businesses, these panels also pose substantial safety risks to our firefighters without the incorporation of effective safety regulations. Electrocution is the most notable risk to firefighters. Currently, when a fire occurs in a household with solar panels, the only way of shutting off electricity to the household is via a switch inside the house. Alternatively, when a fire occurs in a traditional home without solar panels, firefighters are able to shut off electricity at the telephone pole, away from the burning house. Requiring a shutoff switch away from households utilizing solar panels would help minimize the risk of injury to firefighters as well as prevent the spread of dangerous electrical fires.

Further, there are currently roofs in Connecticut that are completely covered by solar panels. If a fire occurs in these households, firefighters are unable to properly vent the fire by creating holes in the roof. The ability to ventilate a roof is an integral aspect of firefighting because it allows the firefighters to enter the house without inhaling high amounts of smoke. I would propose 25% of the roof be left uncovered to allow firefighters to properly and safely access a roof to do their job.

The bottom line is safety. The 2014 electrical code book has provisions which have yet to be approved; the 2011 provisions were only just approved. Let us protect the very people who are risking their lives to protect us. I implore you to reflect on our situation here. I will continue to make myself available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you again for this opportunity and for the great work this Committee has accomplished.

Jay M. Case  
State Representative, 63<sup>rd</sup> District