



Testimony of Environment Connecticut State Director Chris Phelps  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy & Technology Committee

3/1/2016

Regarding SB 224, ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE CAPACITY AND CRITERIA FOR CERTAIN RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION FACILITIES***

Senator Doyle, Representative Reed, and members of the Committee on Energy and Technology, my name is Chris Phelps and I am State Director for Environment Connecticut. I thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments regarding SB 224.

Environment Connecticut appreciates and supports this committee's and the General Assembly's commitment to increasing the amount of Connecticut's energy that comes from zero-carbon renewable resources. To the extent that SB 224 would further that goal, it would be a good thing.

However, we note that this legislation picks a very specific "winner" when it comes to the question of who gets to own, and profit from, expansion of renewable energy in Connecticut. Specifically, it would benefit the incumbent monopoly electric distribution companies. This is a frustration, considering that elsewhere on today's agenda, the committee is hearing testimony regarding "shared renewables" legislation enacted last year that the EDCs have steadfastly opposed and delayed implementing.

Nonetheless, building 200 megawatts of new renewable energy generation in Connecticut would be good for our economy, and would move our state closer to being on a path towards a 100% zero-carbon renewable energy future.

We wish to respectfully offer one specific recommendation regarding this bill:

We suggest that the committee amend the language to specify that the "Class I renewable energy sources" built and operated pursuant to the bill "***shall not utilize fossil fuels.***"

Our rationale for this suggestion is this: Mitigating the pollution that is fueling climate change will require that Connecticut, and our nation, shift our energy economy towards 100% non-carbon renewables in coming decades. As such, now would be a good time for Connecticut's policy makers to ensure that the state's statutory definition of "renewable energy" no longer allows any technologies utilizing carbon-emitting fossil fuels to qualify as "renewable."

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony regarding SB 224.

Chris Phelps  
Environment Connecticut State Director