

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON  
RAISED BILL NO. 334, LCO NO. 2197**

By: Sara C. Bronin

Professor of Law &  
Faculty Director, Center for Energy & Environmental Law  
University of Connecticut School of Law  
sara.bronin@gmail.com | 860-840-1408

*via email at [ettestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:ettestimony@cga.ct.gov)*

March 10, 2016

Thank you to Senator Doyle, Representative Reed, and the Energy & Technology Committee for providing the opportunity to provide public comment on this important energy bill. I am writing in **support** of SB 334, which you are hearing today, and in **opposition** to HB 5427, which you heard on March 1.

By way of brief introduction, I am a tenured law professor at the University of Connecticut School of Law, and I serve as the faculty director for the Center for Energy and Environmental Law. My scholarship focuses on the areas of land use and renewable energy law and policy, and I have written several articles on community energy – including shared solar. I should note at the outset that my views do not necessarily represent the views of the University of Connecticut or its Law School.

Today, I would like to urge you to **adopt** SB 334 and **reject** HB 5427.

Our energy costs are the highest in the continental United States. Simply put, traditional models aren't working. Connecticut desperately needs to join a growing number of states which have allowed private parties to share in the benefits and the costs of energy generation facilities.

Community energy has tremendous benefits for not just participants, but also for the broader community and the environment. Shared solar is particularly important to places like Hartford, where low-income individuals residing on small urban lots or in apartment buildings may not have either the physical space or the financial capitol to have individual solar generation. In anticipation of community energy being available to consumers at some future point, Hartford has totally revamped its zoning regulations to allow for solar and wind everywhere – and even big wind along the I-91 corridor. We and other towns are now waiting for the State to allow the private market to do the work of creating innovative arrangements that bring renewable energy to more consumers.

Despite the fact that Connecticut nominally adopted shared solar last year, for a variety of reasons with which this Committee is very familiar, the program has not opened up yet.

Uncertainty has resulted in tens of millions of dollars in lost private investment, some net loss in public tax dollars, and a cost to the environment.

As written, SB 334 makes some modest and useful clarifications to the shared solar law previously passed by the legislature. I sincerely hope that with these clarifications, the pilot program can go into full effect. By contrast, HB 5427 places unnecessary constraints on the financing of solar projects, and should be rejected.

Going beyond the language of these two bills, in an ideal world, the pilot program would be significantly expanded – with no cap on generation. I hope you might consider doing so in the very near future.

Thank you for considering my testimony.