

TESTIMONY BEFORE
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY
S.B. 394 – AN ACT CONCERNING VIRTUAL NET METERING AND CERTAIN
ZERO ORLOW EMISSION GENERATION PROJECTS
MARCH 10, 2016

Good afternoon. Senator Doyle, Representative Reed, Senator Formica and Representative Ackert, we are Tony Falzarano, Mayor of Putnam, and Doug Cutler, Putnam Town Administrator, and we are testifying in favor of SB. 394, An Act Concerning Virtual Net Metering and Certain Low Emission Generation Projects.

Putnam is one of the “stranded towns” that is affected by the VNEW program cap. In 2015, we went down the road to receive RFPs to place solar photovoltaic panels on our closed municipal solid waste landfill. Thinking that we were eligible for ZREC awards, we reviewed a number of proposals and decided to go with a proposal from SolarCity to install the project on our landfill.

We’ve signed a contract with SolarCity and we were expecting that they would proceed with the necessary permitting so that the panels could be constructed on our landfill and we would start receiving the cost savings benefit to our energy costs over the projected 20 year contract period.

Starting in Year One, we would start realizing savings and over the entire 20 year length of the contract, we would realize over \$1 million in savings. We were planning to allocate those electricity savings to our wastewater and water treatment (two sites) plants, sewer lift stations, schools and other critical municipal facilities.

As will be pointed out by other towns in the same category, we developed our project in good faith and spent quite a bit of time, money and effort, to realize the expected reduction in energy costs.

As many of the Committee members may know, Putnam is a distressed municipality and our sewer and water ratepayers in the past five years have seen their rates doubled due to paying for long delayed improvements to our water and sewer systems. The electricity energy savings derived from our solar project would greatly increase our ability to lower sewer and water rates. In addition, we consider the ability to promote solar energy for economic development purposes.

We believe we are being unfairly penalized for attempting to take advantage of a program that would significantly lower our energy costs at our high use municipal facilities, retain or increase creation of local jobs, and achieve the benefits of VNEM.

You have also received testimony from REEBA citing concerns as to how the proposed bill was drafted. We agree with REEBA's concerns and support their language to address the permitting requirement to just has "obtained a letter of intent, power purchase agreement, or other form of off-take agreement with the solar developer."

On behalf of our town, its residents and ratepayers, we urge the committee to support this legislation allowing us and fellow towns to move forward with our projects. Thank you for this opportunity to supply testimony.