

Testimony for State Agency

Testimony before the Connecticut General Assembly's
Energy & Technology Committee

on

Proposed Senate Bill 106, *An Act Concerning Zero-Carbon Generating Facilities
and Achieving Connecticut's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mandated Levels*

By

Mary Ellen Jukoski, Ed.D.

February 7, 2016

Co-chairs Reed, Winfield, Formica, ranking member Hoydick and members of the Energy & Technology Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify/comment today on Proposed Senate Bill 106, *An Act Concerning Zero-Carbon Generating Facilities and Achieving Connecticut's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mandated Levels*. My name is Mary Ellen Jukoski and I am President of Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) in Norwich, CT. Please accept this written testimony on behalf of Three Rivers Community College in support for Proposed Senate Bill 106.

I. Three Rivers Community College is one of 12 publicly funded community colleges in Norwich, CT.

TRCC has partnered with Dominion to offer courses and a two-year associate's degree in nuclear engineering technology. This is the only program of its kind in New England, one of three in the country, and considered one of the best in the nation. Through classroom, laboratory, and simulator instruction, this Program educates students on the theories underlying the safe operation of nuclear power generating stations. Students also have the opportunity for "hands-on" experiences through 12 weeks of summer co-op employment at Millstone Station's nuclear power plants. This program operates in cooperation with Millstone Station to prepare you as an entry-level technician primarily for the commercial Power industry. This successful partnership with Dominion is one that the college greatly values. As a state funded community college in a state that is experiencing a severe budget situation, we are very concerned about increasing costs and decreasing revenues from the state. As such, we are very conscious of operating efficiently by closely monitoring the college's expenditures. Being able to lower the cost of one of our highest expenditures, electricity, would be welcomed given the state's fiscal condition.

II. Proposed Senate Bill 106, An Act Concerning Zero-Carbon Generating Facilities and Achieving Connecticut's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mandated Levels

As a state-funded agency in Connecticut, we care deeply about the cost of electricity. Its high costs are one of our operating challenges. Last year, the Connecticut Senate passed legislation that would have created a competitive process overseen by the state to reduce

retail electric rates. The measure was not acted on in the House. This committee should revisit this legislation this year.

First, the legislation is consumer friendly energy policy. Connecticut has pursued multiple competitive processes to serve retail consumers directly. However, to date, these solicitations have been limited in scope. They have only allowed Natural Gas, Large-Scale Hydro and Class I Renewable resources the ability to compete. This does not make sense. If Connecticut wants the lowest-cost, longest-term resource that also meets their environmental and economic goals, this solicitation process has to be expanded. Broadening the list to include nuclear power, among others, will encourage more competition and lower costs. That will benefit my non-profit/association and all consumers alike.

The legislature, and this committee in particular, deserves credit for last year's legislation and the construct of what was proposed. The concept from last year was simple. It was a competitive process to derive low cost retail electricity. Moreover, the legislative language mandated that the overseers of the solicitation, the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Attorney General's Office, the Office of the Consumer Counsel and the Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA) could only proceed with selecting a winning bid if it was determined to be in ratepayers' interest. As a non-profit/association, this provides me with comfort and certainty knowing I will be protected. This is smart policy and good consumer protection. In essence, the legislation is a tool to try and get more cost effective retail electricity. However, if the state regulators do not think that is being accomplished, the state is not mandated to act.

Adding additional resources to compete, like nuclear power, will help reduce costs. On a personal note, I hope Dominion's Millstone Power Station competes hard and wins. TRCC is a partner of theirs by providing college-level courses and an associate's degree program in nuclear engineering technology. This program provides a knowledgeable, trained workforce for Dominion. Dominion as a leading corporate citizen provides full scholarships to 15 students annually. In addition, they provide 12 weeks of summer co-op employment at Millstone Station's nuclear power plant along with paying for student's books and travel costs. Dominion has also provided simulator equipment to the lab. The simulator is estimated to cost a million dollars. Dominion's financial support as a responsible, leading corporate citizen allows TRCC to have one of the best programs in the nation.

This competitively designed legislation requires no state or local subsidies and gives Dominion a chance to sell Millstone's power directly to Connecticut consumers. If they are the selected bidder, Connecticut will enjoy all of Millstone's carbon-free attributes and the economic impacts that the station brings too. As a non-profit/association, I know the benefits are many. Millstone produces over \$1.5 billion annually in economic benefits for Connecticut. Why would we risk losing that by preventing them the opportunity to compete to sell directly to Connecticut consumers?

For Connecticut's consumers, and especially the non-profit/association sector, please pass this competitive legislation that will benefit ratepayers regardless of who the winning bid is.

Thank you.

Mary Ellen

Mary Ellen Jukoski, Ed.D.
President
Three Rivers Community College
574 New London Turnpike
Norwich, Ct. 06360

Office: C209C
Phone: 860-215-9007
Fax: 860-215-9917