



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

February 7, 2017

Opposing Proposed Senate Bill 106, AAC ZERO-CARBON ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITIES AND
ACHIEVING CONNECTICUT'S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS MANDATED LEVELS

Senator Winfield, Senator Formica, Representative Reed, and members of the Energy and Technology Committee, my name is Chris Phelps and I am State Director for Environment Connecticut. We are a member-supported nonprofit advocate for clean air, clean water, and conservation of our natural landscapes. Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments concerning SB 106.

Stopping catastrophic climate change requires that Connecticut, and the nation as a whole, transition to 100% zero-carbon renewable energy within a matter of decades. Environment Connecticut strongly supports policies, such as the state's required 80% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century, Renewable Portfolio Standard for electric generation, and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative capping carbon emissions from power plants, all of which help move our state towards a 100% renewable energy future.

As introduced, we have serious concerns about SB 106. This bill appears intended to establish a mechanism to provide a guaranteed above-market rate for existing generators of nuclear power in the state. We oppose such efforts to subsidize nuclear power in part because such policies inevitably undermine the growth in renewable energy necessary to achieve long term renewable energy and climate goals.

Throughout its checkered history, nuclear power has been the recipient of extremely large subsidies paid by electric ratepayers. These subsidies, paid over the course of many decades, far exceed anything that renewable energy generators have received, or require, to grow capacity, create jobs, and cut carbon pollution.

Following electric deregulation in the 1990's, Connecticut ratepayers were saddled with billions of dollars in so-called "stranded costs" of unpaid debts associated with nuclear reactors. Nationwide, ratepayers similarly bailed out the nuclear industry to the tune of an estimated

more than \$100 billion. Companies such as Dominion, current owner of the Millstone power nuclear plant, were the beneficiaries of these ratepayers subsidies, allowing them to sell their generation at a lower price that masked its true, far higher true cost.

As proposed, SB 106 would appear to repeat the mistakes of the past and risk handing a huge, unnecessary, economically burdensome subsidy to Millstone. Rather than go down that path again, Connecticut should focus on incentivizing a transition away from nuclear and fossil fuels towards a goal of 100% zero-carbon renewable energy sources. A starting point would be to expand Connecticut's Renewable Portfolio Standard to require 50% of the state's electric demand be met by Class I renewable resources by the year 2030. This would put Connecticut on track to achieving 100% renewable energy by 2050.

Environment Connecticut urges the committee to reject SB 106 and instead support measures to rapidly expand renewable energy's role in meeting our energy needs.

Sincerely,

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