



**Testimony of RENEW Northeast, Inc. before the
Energy and Technology Committee on**

Senate Bill 106

***An Act Concerning Zero Carbon Electric Generating Facilities and
Achieving Connecticut's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mandated Levels***

February 7, 2017

Senator Winfield, Senator Formica, Representative Reed, Representative Hoydick and members of the Energy and Technology Committee, my name is Francis Pullaro and I am here on behalf of RENEW Northeast, Inc. ("RENEW"),¹ its Executive Director, to comment on Senate Bill 106, *An Act Concerning Zero Carbon Electric Generating Facilities and Achieving Connecticut's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mandated Levels*.

RENEW understands this bill, now only a concept, is designed in large part to ensure Connecticut's carbon free nuclear resource can survive in this era of low wholesale electric power prices to serve as a "bridge" until substantially more renewable energy generation begins supplying Connecticut with carbon-free electricity. If the committee decides to pursue development of this concept, RENEW urges that it be drafted so that it is not a "bridge to nowhere" but includes language ensuring renewables will be on the other side of that bridge.

This objective can be achieved by strengthening Connecticut's Class I Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) by extending it past 2020 and requiring 50 percent renewable energy by 2030- a goal just set by New York. This will give Connecticut an opportunity to concentrate on advancing the next generation of renewables like offshore wind in the Atlantic waters, and solar and wind in the state and from our north and west. An update to the successful RPS program should also ensure the region's existing renewable energy fleet like decades old hydropower- the first carbon-free generators- can also

¹ The comments expressed herein represent the views of RENEW and not necessarily those of any particular member of RENEW. RENEW is a non-profit association uniting the renewable energy industry and environmental advocates whose mission involves coordinating the ideas and resources of its members with the goal of increasing environmentally sustainable energy generation in the Northeast from the region's abundant, indigenous renewable resources. RENEW has focused on highlighting the value of grid-scale resources- specifically offshore and onshore wind and small hydropower- and the benefits of transmission investment to deliver renewable energy to load centers in the Northeast. RENEW members own and/or are developing large-scale wind and hydropower facilities in Connecticut and across the Northeast. Others are independent transmission developers with proposals for transmission facilities to connect clean energy resources from around the region to Southern New England.

assist Connecticut directly in achieving its requirements under the Global Warming Solutions Act. Expansion of Connecticut's renewable energy contracting programs to match a RPS expansion will ensure compliance with cost-effective generation as was shown in DEEP's recently concluded RFPs.

A Renewables First Strategy Is a Ready-Made, Cost-Effective Approach to Meeting Environmental and Economic Development Goals

Renewable energy projects are providing Connecticut with positive economic benefits to host communities, including much needed new tax revenue that often exceeds hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. The stream of projects support local construction and service jobs during development and provide new opportunities in operations and maintenance once projects begin supplying clean energy.

Today's level of installed renewable energy in the state and region pales in comparison to the potential. By extending the RPS, developers will be incentivized to develop renewables like wind and solar here in Connecticut and across the region for delivery to the state. Recent DEEP and regional competitive solicitations reveal onshore wind and solar developers are providing renewable energy at prices that compare favorably to the projected long-term market prices of power and renewable energy certificates.

Abundant offshore wind can connect to southeastern Connecticut and provide opportunities for the state to be involved in the construction, maritime and service sector activities related to the construction of offshore wind generation and transmission facilities. The U.S. Department of Energy has estimated that by the year 2030 there will be 43,000 offshore wind related jobs on the East Coast alone. The states that go first in establishing this new growth industry will capture the largest amount of this market share. All of Connecticut's neighboring states are advancing offshore wind with Rhode Island having the first operating project, Massachusetts set this summer to issue an RFP for the procurement of at least 400 megawatts, and New York's Governor Cuomo recently announcing a massive plan to build offshore wind and its Long Island Power Authority just approving a contract for a new 90 megawatt offshore wind facility.

Policies Are Needed to Help Small Hydro Overcome the Same Economic Challenges Faced by Nuclear

Any legislation to support non-renewable zero carbon emitting resources like nuclear should also include measures to support the region's existing renewable energy resources that face the same economic pressures from today's low wholesale electricity prices. Small hydropower facilities are the region's oldest carbon free energy resources. They have many of the same operations and maintenance costs as larger renewable energy facilities but with lower output to spread across the cost. Contracting

opportunities can assist legacy hydropower. For small hydropower, the RPS also provides ways to offset these costs, but it only covers projects up to 5 megawatts. RENEW recommends raising the cap on eligible Class II small hydropower to 30 MW thereby aligning it with the Class I definition and that of many other states. This change will also allow Connecticut to take advantage of existing hydro resources that are available to assist the state in meeting its incremental carbon reduction requirements.

RENEW appreciates the opportunity to offer these comments on policies that will ensure compliance with Connecticut's Global Warming Solutions Act at low cost. RENEW will continue to advocate for ways to lower the cost of renewable energy, decrease the region's dependence on fossil fuels and ensure a significant role for renewable energy resources that will boost Connecticut's economy.

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