

# O<sup>the</sup>Neill

eugene o'neill  
theater center

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

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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 Preston Whiteway and I am the Executive Director for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. I am here today to express the O'Neill's support for Proposed Senate Bill 106.

## **I. Eugene O'Neill Theater Center**

The O'Neill is the nation's preeminent developmental theater, with a mission to discover, nurture and develop new work and new artists for the stage. Our impact on American culture is immense, with artists such as Lin Manuel Miranda, Meryl Steep, Michael Douglas, John Krasinski, August Wilson, and hundreds more all launching their careers here. The O'Neill has won two Tony Awards and was awarded the National Medal of Arts in September 2016 by President Obama for our services to American culture.

Located on the shoreline in Waterford, CT, the O'Neill operates major programs in plays, musicals, puppetry, cabaret, criticism and an undergraduate school.

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

As a non-profit 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. My non-profit is a neighbor and partner of theirs. Dominion's commitment to the community – locally and state-wide – is real and tangible. The O'Neill's national impact and success is attributable to partners like Dominion.

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 who the winning bid is.

Thank you.

Preston Whiteway  
Executive Director