

To: Energy and Technology Committee

From: Dr. Gary Bent
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Re: LCO 2665 (Changes to SB 09)

I thank the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony. I ask that the some changes to SB 09 in LCO 2665 be modified before it is sent forward.

I. In Lines 399 to 415 of LCO 2665, the rooftop solar customer is offered two options for paying his or her electric bill. Option 1 (Lines 405 and 406) was the only option in SB 09. The customer gets a flat rate for electricity generated from the solar panels for twenty years. The rate is to be set by PURA. It is very likely that the rate will be less than the cost of electricity from the electric distribution company. Thus the solar panel owner gets paid less for the energy generated by the panels than the energy the building uses. As the price of electricity goes up, the disparity gets larger.

The second option (Lines 406 to 414) is complicated. This option puts the utility meter between the solar panels and the house so that all energy production by the panels is measured including energy consumption by the building and energy put to the grid. The present net metering method has the utility meter between the house and the grid so the consumption of solar by the house is not measured.

Neither of these options is very good. A net metering configuration has the utility meter between the grid and the house. The energy imported by the house from the grid is measured (meter going forward) or the energy exported from the house to the grid is measured (meter going backwards). Only the net metering option allows the panel owner to keep their own solar consumption “behind the meter” and use it at their discretion. **This is a basic property right.**

The two options need to be replaced with the net metering option. It should be kept as described in Lines 278 to 300. The two options being proposed would seriously reduce motivation for home owners to install solar panels and/or add battery storage. This would impact the economic growth from solar jobs going on in Connecticut. It would also decrease the possibility of shifting the peak of solar output to better match the peak energy usage that could occur with demand response and battery storage.

II. The two options discussed above are made worse by Lines 414 to 420 that caps each option at 50% of the funds allocated for residential solar. The customer should be allowed to choose whichever option is best for him or her.

III. Lines 420 to 423 limits the amount of rooftop solar to the current electric load that a house uses. This is contrary to the Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES) developed by DEEP. The CES calls for the expansion of electric vehicles to cut greenhouse gas emissions. It also calls for the transformation of residential and commercial heating from fossil fuel generation to heat pumps, geothermal, and electric water heaters that use only electricity. If this is to occur, then home owners need to be able to increase their electrical load to charge electric vehicles and to install heat pumps. The rooftop solar that is allowed should be at least 125% (maybe even

150%) of the current electrical load. Having electric vehicles, heat pumps or geothermal, and electric water heaters will enable demand response that can match peak electrical use.