

March 1, 2018

Connecticut General Assembly, Energy & Technology Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3900  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Testimony of the American Lung Association in Connecticut regarding SB9, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Energy Future**

Dear Distinguished Chairpersons and Members of the Energy & Technology Committee:

My name is Ruth Canovi. I am the Director of Public Policy for the American Lung Association in Connecticut. The American Lung Association is a not-for-profit public health association working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. Healthy air to breathe is integral to achieving our mission. The American Lung Association urges this committee to adopt policies that make our state more energy efficient and use healthier/cleaner sources of energy with a goal of improving the quality of the air we breathe. We strongly support expanding the renewable portfolio standard as proposed in SB 9. This will help Connecticut meet the 45% emissions reduction target established by the Governor's Council on Climate Change. However, we are opposed to the proposal to eliminate net metering in Connecticut.

We are seriously concerned about the quality of the air we breathe. Our 2017 State of the Air Report once again shows us that Connecticut's ozone pollution is the worst in the Eastern half of the country. Seven of our eight counties earn an F for ozone pollution and the eighth earns a D. We also track particle pollution and while we fare better in that arena, there is certainly room for improvement.<sup>1</sup>

In 2013, the World Health Organization classified air pollution as carcinogenic. The general public, especially children, elderly and people with lung disease are especially at risk for the myriad of adverse health effects linked to air pollution including shortness of breath, coughing, inflammation and damage to airways and aggravation of lung disease like asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Air pollution can also increase frequency of asthma attacks and susceptibility to infection. Evidence also points to ozone causing cardiovascular damage and an increase in the risk of low birth weight babies.<sup>2</sup> Across Connecticut, there are hundreds of thousands of adults and kids with asthma. Fewer emissions

will prevent asthma attacks and exacerbations, reduce emergency room visits and the risk of death. The list of vulnerable populations is long, but ultimately, we all rely on, and deserve, healthy air.

In addition to the direct impact of breathing unhealthy air, we also are seeing an increase in heat-related illnesses due to warming climate around the country. These health impacts are only expected to worsen with rising temperatures. The shift away from fossil fuels to cleaner, safer alternatives is vitally important for Connecticut's health.

The Lung Association encourages this committee to adopt a strong Renewable Portfolio Standard as recommended in this legislation. Please reconsider the proposal to eliminate net metering – we need to eliminate barriers to accessing healthier energy sources. In fact, over at our office in East Hartford, we have invested in solar panels and two electric vehicle chargers because we believe that improving air quality is so crucial to our mission. We are worried that repealing net metering would hinder these efforts and the efforts of thousands of Connecticut residents who want to proactively shift from fossil fuels to newer, cleaner energy sources.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals.

Sincerely,

Ruth Canovi, MPH  
Director, Public Policy  
American Lung Association, Connecticut

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<sup>1</sup> American Lung Association State of the Air Report. 2017. [www.stateoftheair.org](http://www.stateoftheair.org)

<sup>2</sup> Ozone and Your Health. Environmental Protection Agency. <https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/ozone-c.pdf>

