

Testimony Before the Committee on Energy & Technology

Concerning

S.B. No. 9 AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S ENERGY FUTURE

Submitted by *Susan Eastwood, Chair, Ashford Clean Energy Task Force*

March 1, 2018

Dear Members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

I am submitting this testimony concerning Proposed S.B. No. 9, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Energy Future.

I support the provision in this bill that would require Connecticut to update and extend its Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), but I strongly oppose the provision that would eliminate net metering for residential solar customers.

Renewable Portfolio Standard

I urge the committee to support an expansion of the RPS to at least 40% by 2030.

This is crucial because Connecticut's RPS currently does not set any increase in standards beyond 2020, and the 2020 standard is not as aggressive as that of neighboring states, including New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The proposed expansion of the RPS to 40% by 2030 is the minimum required to meet the emissions reduction goal recommended by the Governor's Council on Climate Change.

Compliance with a higher RPS will also reduce emissions of harmful pollutants like nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and mercury, and provide substantial health benefits for Connecticut residents. With all eight of our counties rating a failing grade from the American Lung Association, this is vitally important for the health of our children and other vulnerable populations.

The RPS is also good for Connecticut's economic growth, driving investments in renewables, and job growth. According to a January 2017 report by U.S. Department of Energy, there are nearly 37,000 energy efficiency and solar jobs in Connecticut. Continued expansion of renewables in Connecticut will mean more employment opportunities and economic growth.

Net Metering (Section 4)

I strongly oppose the proposed elimination of net metering for residential solar customers, and I urge the committee to reject this aspect of SB 9.

I am a residential solar customer and I am proud to be able to generate much of my own electricity from the sun. I have plans to add more solar capacity and battery storage. The Ashford Clean Energy Task Force has worked with dozens of families in this rural area to educate and facilitate their transition to solar power. The majority were highly motivated to have battery

storage for their power, due to the long post-storm periods we have endured without power from the grid. Now that battery storage is beginning to be affordable, I foresee a huge potential for growth in solar with battery storage.

SB 9 would require solar customers to sell all the power they generate back to the grid and would prohibit battery storage of the power they generate. This would sharply slow the development of a clean, cost-effective grid, hurt the growing solar industry in Connecticut, and raise energy costs.

This is a flat-out betrayal of the promise of solar and is contrary to Connecticut's commitments to clean energy and reduction of greenhouse gasses. Further, it throws current solar owners under the bus and undercuts the many who had hoped to add solar with battery storage.

Please reject Section 4, commit to a stronger RPS of at least 40% and move Connecticut into the future with clean energy.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony concerning SB 9, which would strengthen Connecticut's Renewable Portfolio Standard and thereby help to meet our state's climate goals while fostering local job creation and improvements in public health.

Respectfully submitted,

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