



S. B. 9 – Testimony of Melissa Everett, Ph.D.,
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S. B. 9 begins with an encouraging commitment to scaling up renewable energy, with a commitment to 40% Class 1 renewables by the year 2030. This would be a transformative, exciting agenda – if the rest of the bill did not contain provisions that are likely to sabotage the possibility (as well as harming Connecticut’s solar industry).

First, the RPS provision itself is undercut by a reduction in the penalty to utilities for not meeting their obligations. Given the seriousness of climate disruption and the state’s fresh recognition of it through the Governor’s Council on Climate Change, if this fee is changed, it should be increased.

Second, we are deeply concerned that, in a short legislative session, a proposal as momentous as ending net metering is being suggested – especially since the proposed replacement tariff system is not described in detail in the bill.

Net metering is not broken. There is no reason to rush forward a replacement system, knowing the depth of concern about it among clean energy and environmental advocates, as well as the research supporting its benefits. A 2016 review of research on net metering by Brookings Institution scholars – including studies by Public Service Commissions¹ in 6 states – showed that, in nearly all cases, the value of net metering exceeded any costs to ratepayers or utilities. Getting rate design right for scaled-up renewables is important, but not so urgent that it should be undertaken without careful consensus building.

In our view, Section 4 of S.B. 9 is a disturbing withdrawal of consumer rights and may seriously distort the energy marketplace. Requiring that consumers purchase all their power from the grid at retail rates, and sell all their solar power into the grid at wholesale rates, sharply reduces the savings that are possible through well designed solar projects. It robs households and businesses of the right to manage their energy resources, especially as storage options become more cost-effective. It also pre-empts the possibility of rate designs that encourage demand response and reward the many benefits that solar power delivers to the grid.

The Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering called for a Value of Solar study as a foundation for rate design three years ago. That is still the wisest next step for Connecticut as we establish a system for pricing power and grid services that reflect the contributions of renewable energy to the

¹ “Rooftop Solar: Net Metering is a Net Benefit,” Brookings Institution, downloaded 2-26-18 at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/rooftop-solar-net-metering-is-a-net-benefit/>



general welfare, and fairly distribute the burdens of maintaining the grid as behind-the-meter renewables become a greater percentage of the energy mix.

It is a shame that this bill combines good and needed policy development with this dangerous proposal. To facilitate true debate on the merits of each component, we believe they should be re-drafted as separate bills. We understand from Rep. Reed's public statement in Branford on February 27, 2018 that some part of the current bill has been re-written to avoid restricting customers' ability to store energy. We very much appreciate this and look forward to seeing that revised language.

Today you have heard from a lot of concerned, articulate and committed clean energy advocates. Many of us are happy to work with you on re-framing the RPS language so that the incentives for compliance are not compromised, and building support for passing that provision. And if the bill can be set free of the counterproductive proposal to end net metering, we will work tirelessly with you to get the expanded RPS adopted.

We hope you will remove from this bill any change to net metering policy, and look beyond this legislative session to forge a consensus on fair valuing of renewable energy in a way that respects consumers' right to choose.

Thank you.