

Testimony Before the Committee on Energy & Technology

Concerning

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

Submitted by **Richard Herzer**

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.

- I currently purchase 100% renewable energy for my home in Glastonbury, because I want to support a market for clean, renewable energy.
- Connecticut has made strong commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change, and achieving those goals will require a transition to a clean energy economy that relies primarily on electricity generated from renewable sources.
- 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. The RPS is also good for Connecticut's economic growth. The RPS helps drive investments in renewables by guaranteeing that there is a market for that energy and by helping those renewables become more competitive with fossil fuel-based energy that currently has a market advantage.
- 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

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.

- The recent experience in Nevada, where the curtailing of net metering resulted in a 92% drop in new residential solar installations in the first quarter of 2016 should serve as a model – or warning- of what we could expect to happen in Connecticut.
- According to a recent NY Times report, over the past six years, rooftop solar panel installations have seen explosive growth — as much as 900 percent by one estimate.

- That growth has come to a shuddering stop this year, with a projected decline in new installations of 2 percent, according to projections from Bloomberg New Energy Finance.
- A number of factors are driving the reversal, but the decline has also coincided with a lobbying campaign by traditional utilities, which have been working in state capitals across the country to reverse incentives for homeowners to install solar panels and thus maintain fossil fuel based electricity generation and traditional revenue streams.
- In all studies of the economic impacts of distributed generation (excluding those that were funded by utility companies) on all ratepayers, not just those with PV systems, there was a net benefit to the production of clean energy under a net metering system.
- The elimination of net metering may help utilities hold on to more customers. However, in a time of falling solar costs, rising solar industry employment and urgent needs to curtail greenhouse gas emissions, it is hard to see how policies unfavorable to solar would benefit society overall.

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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