

Testimony Before the Committee on Energy & Technology

Concerning

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

Submitted by David Kowalchik

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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

This state already faces problems with job creation and more importantly job retention. Why move forward with a bill that hinders the expansion of a growing industry in our state. Four years ago we installed a PV array on our roof to offset the cost of our electric bill. We sat down and ran the numbers and the deciding factor for us was the net metering. If you eliminate this provision you will be undercutting a new industry already bringing jobs and prosperity to our state. If there were no net metering in place we would not have chosen to go solar. We would never have hired the local arborist to trim our trees, we would have never hired the company we did to purchase our solar array, and they would never have hired the local contractors they did to install our solar array. In net metering the utility only pays back a fraction of what they charge for energy production and delivery. Please reject this gift to the utilities and show the leadership and forward thinking needed to keep Connecticut relevant in the renewable energy market.

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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