



3/1/2018

Re: Funding RGGI with repeal of exemption on solar materials

Greetings members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

My name is Stephen Pelton and I'm from EcoSmart Home Services. Our company is an authorized Home Energy Solutions contractor which also sells and installs solar. We have been in the Home Energy Solutions program since 2009 and in the solar program since 2012. Our company specializes in the comprehensive upgrades of homes doing efficiency first and then adding solar when it makes sense.

To balance the budget last session, there was a securitization of rate payer and RGGI dollars which has caused chaos in both the Home Energy Solutions program as well as the solar program and it has affected our business and our ability to grow.

Even though there is close to 200 million dollars left in the Energy Efficiency Fund, for the HES program those dollars can only be spent on the homes which are heated with gas and electricity. The homes which heat with oil, which represent over ½ of the homes serviced last year, are no longer receiving the same benefits as those heating with gas and electricity due to PURA regulations requiring that money taken from gas and electrical bills be used for gas and electric homes. Oil homes are only eligible for air-sealing, lighting upgrades and water measures.

The consequence of the RGGI raid has left Home Energy Solutions contractors with a cap of 17% of their projects to be oil heated homes and those homes we do service are not eligible for insulation or HVAC rebates. Since our company offers upgrades and more than ½ of our audits last year were oil heated homes, we will have a problem keeping our lead auditors employed if we can't keep them busy.

So even though I would much rather just have the RGGI dollars restored without having to find creative ways to make that happen and while I really don't want to add \$1,200 worth of costs to each solar project, I find myself in the position of supporting the removal of the sales tax exemption for solar materials in order to restore the funding for RGGI. The result would be the restoration of the benefits for oil heated homes and funding for the Green Bank to continue to offer support for the growth of the solar business. By restoring RGGI it will help the HVAC contractors we work with as well as our installers.

In closing I have always felt that the Energy and Technology Committee should be doing much more to promote the combination of the solar and energy efficiency programs to maximize the rate-payer dollars. By combining the EE and solar programs and making the programs fuel blind, the remaining 200 million dollars or so could be used to more effectively reduce energy usage and costs for CT rate payer.

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