



Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

Testimony Before the Committee on Energy and Technology

In Support of
H.B. No. 5789 AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEAD BY EXAMPLE PROGRAM

and a Comment on
S.B. No. 845 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY DERIVED
FROM ANAEROBIC DIGESTION

Submitted by John Humphries
Executive Director, CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs
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Dear Co-Chairs Needleman and Arconti, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. No. 5789, An Act Concerning the Lead By Example Program. I will also provide comments on Raised Bill No. 845, An Act Concerning the Procurement of Energy Derived from Anaerobic Digestion.

The CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs builds alliances among diverse constituencies to combat climate change and promote racial, economic and environmental justice. We embrace our diversity as a source of power, recognizing that our shared interests in a sustainable climate and a just economy are stronger than any specific issues that may tend to divide us. We believe the climate crisis presents an opportunity to build thriving local economies that are not only more sustainable but also more just and equitable.

Lead By Example Program

Two years ago, we worked with the Acadia Center and other allies to advocate for a renewed commitment to the state's Lead By Example program, recognizing that it had not achieved its potential. Connecticut state government facilities account for 15-20% of the electricity and natural gas consumed by the state's commercial and industrial sector, which costs the state about \$80 million annually. Implementing efficiency measures could reduce costs by 30%, or about \$24 million annually, saving taxpayers money and reducing emissions.¹ Implementing energy efficiency upgrades at state facilities would also lead to in-state job creation and economic development.

¹ DEEP, Leading By Example: Improving Energy Management at State Facilities, 2018, page 3, available at https://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/energy/lbe/LBE_LegReport_2018.pdf.

Our proposals from 2017 would still provide a reasonable framework for strengthening the Lead By Example program today:

1. Stronger Energy Savings Target for State Buildings: Extend and update the current Lead by Example (LBE) program with an energy savings target of a 30% reduction from the state's current energy consumption baseline by the year 2022.
2. New Commitment to Hiring Connecticut Workers: Require renovations to state buildings under the LBE program to include scoring preferences for contractors that commit to hiring in-state workers under a negotiated community workforce agreement.
3. New Commitment to Protect Funding: Require that any incentive funds contributed to LBE projects by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund can only be invested in energy efficiency measures.
4. New Funding Stream and Debt Treatment: Ensure a predictable funding stream for LBE projects, with an annual investment commitment that is treated differently from other debt obligations since these performance contracts are guaranteed to pay for themselves over time.
5. New Updated Plan with Additional Oversight: Develop a detailed plan for achieving the 2022 target in consultation with relevant agencies and stakeholders, who will also participate in an annual review of program performance.

Anaerobic Digestion

In general, I support the expansion of anaerobic digestion as a means for harnessing the energy contained in animal and food waste while reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector. However, I have two comments related to SB 845:

1. I strongly oppose the provision in Section (d) that would establish a time limit on PURA's review process. The proposal to deem a project approved if PURA has not issued a decision within 45 days is unacceptable and a subversion of the regulatory process.
2. I would encourage the committee to include a provision to study the potential for producing pipeline-quality biogas from anaerobic digestion as an alternative to electricity production. Farm-based anaerobic digesters located near gas pipelines are an alternative approach to grid-connected systems that burn the gas on-site. Such biogas can also be used as fuel for fuel cells, which do not burn the gas, and therefore do not produce other toxic emissions like NOx and SOx.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on these bills.

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