February 20, 2018

The Honorable David Arconti Co-Chair, and
The Honorable Norman Needleman, Co-Chair
Energy and Technology Committee
Legislative Office Building, Rm. 3900,
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: HB Bill 7114 - AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT OF ELECTRICITY, NATURAL GAS, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND OTHER ENERGY-RELATED PRODUCTS BY NONPROFIT ENERGY BUYING CONSORTIA.

Dear Senator Needleman, Representative Arconti, and Members of the Committee:

As a member of the Board of Directors of People’s Action for Clean Energy (PACE) and Eastern CT Green Action (ECGA), I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony. I neither support nor oppose this bill, which at a meeting on February 11 was presented as allowing Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) in CT. I respectfully suggest that HB 7114 does not enable CCA, though it should.

CCA allows a municipality or group of municipalities to choose an electricity supplier on behalf of all its residents and small businesses, except those who opt out. The result can be lower rates and more clean energy in a town’s electricity mix. This is how it works in Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, California, and other states with CCA programs. Connecticut needs this sensible tool to help our state meet its clean energy and greenhouse gas emission goals.

Instead, HB 7114 only allows municipal or state agencies to form a nonprofit electricity buying consortium for the purpose of getting a better deal on energy. Picture the school departments of three smaller towns deciding to collaborate in buying electricity to save money or increase the renewable energy content for their school buildings. This is not CCA.

A CCA bill would at a minimum allow a municipality or group of municipalities to:

- Enter into contracts to purchase electricity,
- Resell electricity to town residents and businesses (as well as to municipal accounts),
- Automatically enroll town residents and businesses (with opt-out rights),
- Obtain ratepayer information from the utility (to allow the municipality to structure rates and other programs),
- Set rates for participating ratepayers,
- Use ratepayer funds and other financing methods for local energy efficiency and clean energy projects,
If you are interested in CCA for CT, I suggest looking at the summary legislation written by Paul Fenn (see attached). Paul Fenn is the originator of the concept of CCA, wrote the 1997 Massachusetts bill, and helped write the California legislation. His document should not necessarily be the final version of CCA for CT, but it is a good place to start the discussion.

When you decide that you would like to pursue true CCA for CT, other advocates and I would be glad to help by building support among CT stakeholders and identifying experts from MA, NY, RI and CA who can help CT create its own CCA program.

Thank you,

Peter Millman
122 Dog Lane
Storrs CT 06268
860-933-2944