

Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85th) in Support of SB 10, An Act Concerning Certain Recommendations Regarding Climate Change, HB 5351, An Act Concerning Certain Programs and to Incentivize and Implement Electric Energy Storage Resources, HB 5008, An Act Concerning the Establishment of High Performance Green Building Standards for Voluntary Adoption by municipalities, HB 5348, An Act Concerning the Study of Community Choice Aggregation, and in Opposition to HB 5346, An Act Concerning Residential Sewer Use Charges During the Summer Months.

Before the Energy and Technology Committee

Thursday, March 5, 2020

SB 10, An Act Concerning Certain Recommendations Regarding Climate Change, is a good step in the right direction, but could use some modification. Sec. 1 ties us to California standards which will reduce emissions in the strongest possible way. Section 2 shortens the timetable for climate change response—a critical need. As Greta Thunberg said, "When your house is on fire, you don't wait a few more years to start putting it out..." She suggests we need goals for 2020 and every following month and year. Sec. 3 emphasizes demand responses and energy storage to deal with peak loads. The only part I have issue with is 3(d) which discusses 20 year agreements. With technology changing so fast, we should shorten the agreement period to no more than 10 years. Five is even better.

HB 5351, An Act Concerning Certain Programs and to Incentivize and Implement Electric Energy Storage Resources is an important tool for creating energy storage. With storage technology, we can avoid building new power plants simply to handle a few days of peak load. In this bill, we should go bold and authorize PURA to allow a utility to earn revenues from energy storage. With financial incentives, energy storage will happen.

HB 5008, An Act Concerning the Establishment of High Performance Green Building Standards for Voluntary Adoption by Municipalities, would set up model construction standards designed to save energy in the residential and commercial building sectors, which is 40% of energy use. Some ideas (attached) include smart design, energy use modeling, super-sealing the building envelope, super-insulating the building envelope, efficient hot water heating, highly insulated windows and doors, using the sun for solar tempering, creating an energy-efficient fresh air supply, selecting an efficient heating/cooling system, installing efficient lighting, selecting energy efficient appliances and electronics, and using the sun for renewable energy. According to the U.S. Dept. of Energy, energy efficiency is the cheapest way to produce more clean energy for residents.

HB 5348, An Act Concerning the Study of Community Choice Aggregation gets the state started on community preference for energy suppliers. But the study will take too long. I recommend the committee change the reporting date to Jan. 1, 2021 so legislators may take action in the 2021 session.

I oppose HB 5346, An Act Concerning Residential Sewer Use Charges During the Summer Months. Connecticut is blessed with ample rainfall, but we suffer seasonal shortages in parts of our state. Managing water resources was the whole point of passing the State Water Plan last year. This bill would undermine good water management because it doesn't count the heavy water use in summer months, which is the time when shortages appear. Consumers should pay for actual, real-time use of water resources. Only then can we manage our water systems and keep them in good repair to protect both communities and the environment.