

March 2, 2021

Dear Joint Committee on Energy and Technology,

I write in support of Governor's Bill 882, An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation and Home Energy Affordability, pending four necessary amendments to Section 1.

As a Wesleyan student, I have spent three years in Connecticut, and I care deeply about our state and our Middletown community. I want to do everything I can to mitigate the destruction that carbon emissions bring to our state. Reaching carbon neutrality by 2040 is crucial, AND to do so we must stop creating new fossil fuel infrastructure.

I am also a member of the Sunrise Movement, a nationwide climate action organization made up of young people. I participate in this organization because I believe climate change poses an existential threat to everyone's survival. This bill aligns with our belief that the climate crisis is an urgent matter than must be swiftly addressed. Lives are at stake if we try to go on with business as usual. Any new fossil fuel infrastructure is business as usual, and business as usual is actively harmful, not neutral.

Section 1: Greenhouse Gas Reduction

I am pleased to see that this bill codifies into statute Governor Lamont's Executive Order 3 to achieve a 100% zero-carbon electric grid by 2040 and that it offers an aggressive path to decarbonization. I have several concerns with provisions of this section, as outlined below.

1. 1.a.3: As written, this bill requires that only electricity *supplied* to electricity customers in the state achieve 100% zero-carbon electricity. To mitigate climate change, **this bill must require all electricity supply and generation within the entire state to be 100% zero-carbon by 2040**. By only covering the electricity supplied to electricity customers, Connecticut could technically achieve the 100% goal in 2040 while still having 54 fossil fuel power plants running in the state, a case that is unacceptable for a state taking climate change seriously.
2. 1.a.4: I support the decarbonization plan targets outlined in 1.a.1 and 1.a.2, but believe there needs to be a more aggressive timeline and a more stringent end goal. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a program of the United Nations, to achieve a global target of 1.5°C of global warming, the planet must decrease net CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) emissions 45% by 2030, "reaching net zero around 2050" (ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/06/SR15_Headline_statements.pdf). Therefore, reaching only an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as established in 1.a.4, is insufficient to halt the worst effects of global climate change. The state must **set a target of net zero carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 2050** to protect our health, land, air, water, and future. This target is possible through deep decarbonization and procurement of carbon offsets, which could be generated within our state for additional economic development benefits.
3. SB 718: I urge you to amend this bill to **include a moratorium on the construction of new fossil fuel power plants statewide** (currently a separate bill, SB 718). Connecticut already has more than its fair share of power generation facilities in Connecticut. This number has the potential to grow if the Killingly power plant and new gas turbines at the NRG Middletown plant move forward. These plants will set Connecticut back further with climate change mitigation and add

to the pollution already affecting our state. Connecticut already has excess power and should only be looking toward renewable energy.

4. 1.a.4: The provision to give the DEEP Commissioner sole authority to set greenhouse gas reduction and electricity supply and generation targets holds potential for abuse. This subsection should be amended to **clarify with more specificity what powers the DEEP Commissioner shall have and what checks and balances will be in place** to ensure that a current or future commissioner does not arbitrarily change targets without sufficient public input.

Section 2: Support for Demand Response and Energy Efficiency

This section would allow DEEP to procure demand response and energy efficiency, which improves grid stability as we procure more electricity from wind and solar. This is essential for a clean energy future.

Sections 3/4: Home Energy Affordability

Transparency is essential to energy affordability. Requiring twelve months of energy bills or a Home Energy Label would help to achieve that goal. This section would encourage building owners, whether residents or landlords, to make necessary energy efficiency upgrades before selling or renting a home.

Renters must pay their home energy bills, but do not have the power to make efficiency upgrades; building owners have no incentive to make upgrades because they do not pay the energy bills. This vicious cycle results in inefficient, uncomfortable, and sometimes unsafe housing conditions. By making energy bills available, prospective renters would have full information on the (in)efficiency of a residence. It is essential that both electricity AND heating fuels are included in this provision, as is currently specified in this bill.

In closing, I urge you to support Governor's Bill 882 after amending Section 1 to

1. Require all supply AND generation to be 100% zero-carbon by 2040,
2. Develop a more aggressive final target for greenhouse gas emissions reduction of net zero by 2050,
3. Establish a moratorium on new fossil fuel plants, and
4. Clarify DEEP Commissioner oversight role, including checks and balances.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Sincerely,

Irene Westfall
Middletown, CT