

March 4, 2021  
Energy and Technology Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Katie S. Dykes

**Senate Bill No. 937 – An Act Concerning Emergency Response Planning and Video Service Wire Removal**

**Senate Bill 951 – An Act Concerning Residential Solar Photovoltaic Systems Solicitations**

**House Bill 6526 – An Act Concerning Electric Suppliers**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the above-referenced proposals. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) offers its support for these bills for the reasons below.

**Senate Bill No. 937 – An Act Concerning Emergency Response Planning and Video Service Wire Removal:**

The investigation conducted in PURA Docket No. 20-08-03, *Investigation into Electric Distribution Companies' Preparation for and Response to Tropical Storm Isaias*, revealed that the EDCs' deployment of Make Safe crews and the operation of the EDCs' municipal liaison programs was inadequate and reforms are needed to ensure appropriate coordination with municipalities to make roads and towns safe following a storm event.

Senate Bill 937 directly addresses important concerns raised by the municipalities in PURA's investigation of the EDCs' preparation for and response to Tropical Storm Isaias. Several municipalities testified in Docket No. 20-08-03 that they experienced a delay in the deployment of Make Safe crews in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isaias. The establishment of a deployment standard by PURA is likely to include details regarding how soon after an emergency the electric distribution companies must deploy Make Safe crews and begin clearing downed electric wires. Such a requirement would eliminate the delays the municipalities testified about and it would hold the EDCs accountable to deploy these crews within a reasonable time. Timely deployment of Make Safe crews is vital during an emergency to ensure the safety of the public.

The bill would also refine the requirements for the EDCs' municipal liaison programs. Such refinement is necessary as several municipalities testified at the evidentiary hearings held in Docket No. 20-08-03 that their assigned liaison was unable to provide pertinent information such as when crews were arriving and the location of those crews once they did arrive. Municipal liaisons serve as the critical link between the EDCs and municipalities during an emergency, and Senate Bill 937 appropriately provides a standard that will provide for smooth coordination and the exchange of timely, accurate and meaningful information.

## **Senate Bill 951 – An Act Concerning Residential Solar Photovoltaic Systems Solicitations**

Senate Bill 951 sets rules for the sales and solicitations of residential solar photovoltaic systems by the provider or an agent of the provider. Those persons will be required to provide prospective customers with certain information about the systems, including an explanation of rates, fees, variable charges and terms and conditions for the systems. It also contains certain guidelines for door-to-door sales to customers. Violations of the provisions of the sections are deemed unfair trade practices.

DEEP supports the concepts in this bill as it is critical to ensure that consumers have the information they need to make informed decisions about participating in the energy programs available to them, and to protect consumers from unfair sales practices that could lead to unexpected increases in their energy bills and/or unfair contract terms and conditions.

## **House Bill 6526 – An Act Concerning Electric Suppliers**

House Bill 6526 offers protections to residential electric supplier customers, including the prohibition of cancellation or termination fees, automatic renewals, the assignment or transfer of customers without approval. DEEP supports providing these additional protections to consumers in order to increase bill transparency and affordability.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact James Albis at [James.Albis@ct.gov](mailto:James.Albis@ct.gov).