

Energy and Technology Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

10:00 AM in Zoom and YouTube Live

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 by Chairman, Rep. Arconti D. 109.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Formica P. S20; Haskell W. S26; Lesser M. S09; McCrory D. S02; Needleman N. S33; Winfield G. S109; McCrory D. S02; 6

Representatives: Ackert T. 008; Allie-Brennan R. 002; Arconti D. 109; Arora H. 151; Buckbee B. 067; Cheeseman H. 037; Demicco M. 021; Ferraro C. 117; Foster J. 057; Gilchrest J. 018; Gresko J. 121; Horn M. 064; Kavros DeGraw E. 017; Meskers S. 150; Mushinsky M. 085; Perone C. 137; Petit W. 022; Piscopo J. 076; Steinberg J. 136; Tercyak P. 0266; Gilchrest J. 018

Absent were:

Senators:

Representatives:

Rep. Arconti called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and started with opening remarks from the Co-Chair and Ranking members.

Rep Arconti moves to Section III of the agenda:

III. BILLS FOR REVIEW

1. H.B. No. 6412 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A LOW-CARBON FUEL BLEND OF HEATING OIL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BIOHEAT ADVISORY BOARD. (ET) Proposed Action – JFS to the Floor

- Rep. Arconti makes a motion to JFS this bill to the floor. It is moved by Rep. Allie-Brennan and seconded by Sen. Formica
- Rep. Piscopo is concerned about the mandate and interfering in the market and the cost of fuel going up in the future when this bill becomes law. He is also concerned about the makeup of the advisory board.
- Rep. Petit asks about the commissioner's ability to wave provisions of the bill and whether or not that ability is absolute or if the commissioner confers with other people.
- The bill passed by roll call vote: Yea: 25, Nay: 1

2. H.B. No. 6410 (RAISED) AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTY FOR VIOLATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE NO SALES SOLICITATION CALLS LISTING. (ET) Proposed Action – JF to the Floor

- Rep. Arconti makes a motion to JF this bill to the floor. It is moved by Rep. Ferraro and seconded by Rep Meskers
- Rep. Cheeseman will be supporting this bill because it improves people's ability to register complaints
- The bill passed by roll call vote: Yea: 26, Nay: 0

3. H.B. No. 6409 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SOLICITATION OF BIOGAS INJECTION PROPOSALS FROM ANAEROBIC DIGESTION FACILITIES. (ET) Proposed Action – JFS to the Floor

- Rep. Arconti makes a motion to JFS this bill to the floor. It is moved by Rep. Ferraro and seconded by Rep Meskers
- Rep. Arora is generally supportive of this bill but questions about what the cost is regarding the rate base. He suggests a possible limit on the cost for ratepayers.
- Rep. Cheeseman is also supportive of this bill and believe that DEEP needs to have a speedy approval process in place so this won't carry on for years.
- Rep. Meskers is in favor of the bill but wants to talk about the landfill costs and to address the financial costs to this environmental issue
- The bill passed by roll call vote: Yea: 26, Nay: 0

4. S.B. No. 856 (RAISED) AN ACT INCREASING REPRESENTATION ON THE ENERGY CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT BOARD. (ET) Proposed Action – JF to the Floor

- Rep. Arconti makes a motion to JF this bill to the floor. It is moved by Sen. Needleman and seconded by Sen. Formica
- The bill passed by roll call vote: Yea: 26, Nay: 0

5. S.B. No. 865 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING THE STUDY OF ENERGY SOURCES. (ET) Proposed Action – JF to the Floor

- Rep. Arconti makes a motion to JF this bill to the floor. It is moved by Rep. Foster and seconded by Rep Tercyak
- Rep Ferraro comments that items #5 and 6 are placeholders and says that members of his caucus understand the need but don't generally support placeholders. The concern is that at the last-minute egregious items make their way into these placeholder bills.
- The bill passed by roll call vote: Yea: 20, Nay: 6

6. H.B. No. 6414 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING THE STUDY OF THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE STATE. (ET) Proposed Action – JF to the Floor

- Rep. Arconti makes a motion to JF this bill to the floor. It is moved by Rep. Allie-Brennan and seconded by Rep Kavros DeGraw
- The bill passed by roll call vote: Yea: 20, Nay: 6

7. H.B. No. 6413 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF A MUNICIPAL ENERGY SECURITY AUTHORITY. (ET) Proposed Action – JF to the Floor

- Rep. Arconti makes a motion to JF this bill to the floor. It is moved by Rep. Allie-Brennan and seconded by Rep Gresko
- Sen. Lesser would like to know how this would be financed
- Rep. Arora would like to know what the driving force is behind the study. As a co-sponsor of this bill, Rep. Gresko discusses that the reasons revolve around expanding an existing project completed in Bridgeport back in 2019 with the hopes of tapping into Federal Department of Energy funding.
- Rep. Arora would also like to know if this bill is only for the city of Bridgeport or for the entire state.
- Rep. Gresko says that this bill would be for the entire state
- Rep. Ackert supports this bill
- The bill passed by roll call vote: Yea: 26, Nay: 0

8. S.B. No. 855 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DECOUPLING OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. (ET) Proposed Action – JF to the Floor

- Rep. Arconti makes a motion to JF this bill to the floor. It is moved by Rep. Allie-Brennan and seconded by Rep Arora
- Sen. Lesser would like to know the goal of this bill
- Rep Arconti states that the purpose of the bill is to begin the process of decoupling PURA from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and return PURA to an independent authority as it was prior to 2012 and that PURA in itself is an adjudicator.
- Sen. Lesser will support the bill today but wants to make sure that it is not the intention of the committee to limit DEEP's ability to create energy policy in the state.
- Rep Mushinsky has similar concerns of Sen Lesser and will be voting no on the bill
- Sen Needleman believes that there are potential conflicts of interest with the current structure but fully supports this bill.
- Rep. Gilchrest has similar concerns as Rep Mushinsky and believes that PURA is an independent rate making authority but believes that they didn't hear from enough folks on what is likely to have major financial and policy impacts and for these reasons will not be voting in favor of the bill
- Sen Winfield shares the same concerns as Sen. Lesser and Rep Mushinsky and will vote in favor of the bill.
- Rep Arora supports the bill
- Rep Steinberg shares Rep Arora's position
- Sen Formica agrees with Rep Steinberg on this issue, however, his one concern with this bill is that only the Commissioner of DEEP would produce the report
- Rep Perone supports the bill
- Rep Petit believes this is an important decoupling and supports the bill
- Rep Buckbee supports the bill
- Rep Foster supports the bill and feels that decoupling PURA and DEEP allows them both to work to their peak efficiency

- Rep Meskers strongly supports the bill.
- Sen Needleman thanks everyone for their comments on this bill
- The bill passed by roll call vote: Yea: 24, Nay: 2

The votes were kept open until 1:30pm at which point the meeting will be adjourned

The next meeting will be the Public Hearing on Thursday March 4th at 10am

William Ginn
Committee Clerk

Jason Snukis
Assistant Clerk