

Energy and Technology Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6409

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SOLICITATION OF BIOGAS INJECTION

Title: PROPOSALS FROM ANAEROBIC DIGESTION FACILITIES.

Vote Date: 3/2/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/18/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Energy and Technology, Sen. Catherine A. Osten

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason this bill was raised was so that the natural gas distribution system in the state can get biogas injections from anaerobic digestion facilities. This would allow the commissioner of DEEP, in consultation with the Office of Consumer Counsel and the Attorney General, to solicit proposals from anaerobic digestion facilities that will make biogas at a suitable quality for injection. This bill was a proposal from DEEP and is aimed at providing lower cost and sustainable waste management system to the state.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Katie Dykes, Commissioner of DEEP: DEEP supports this bill and were the agency who first proposed it. They believe that it will reduce solid waste and carbon emissions. They note that Anaerobic digesters convert organic waste into biogas and digestate which can be converted into electricity. They say that this will allow the state to reach its goals set in the Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy and biogas can net a positive effect on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Marissa Gillett, Chairman of PURA: They write in opposition to this bill unless some changes were made to the bill. In their testimony, they outline some language changes they feel would help the bill be more workable. They also note they have an open proceeding related to this bill. They have a docket due no later than September 1, 2021 that they say will help finalize these standards.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut Green Bank: They write in support of this bill saying it would create renewable natural gas from farm-generated organic waste. They also list out two sites they support that deal with farm and food waste to energy projects. They also attach a Green Bank Impact Report and Anaerobic Digestion Fact Sheet to their testimony.

Patrick McDonnell, Vice President of Regulatory Affairs for Avangrid/UII Holdings Corporation: They write in support of this bill. As a company with large focus on clean energy technologies they say this can help reduce carbon emissions and provide quality biogas. They also note they look to DEEP and PURA to monitor the cost to the ratepayers.

Joan Nichols, Director of Connecticut Farm Bureau Association: They write in support of this legislation with some innovative amendments for on farm anaerobic digesters. They suggest an amending of the bill to include programs like Vermont Cow Power which applies to electricity produced by on-farm anaerobic digesters. They say it is a way for dairy farmers in Connecticut to earn a premium for biogas they produce and would incentivize the projects.

Vincent Pace, Eversource: They write in support of this bill. They say that this effort would help encourage the use of Renewable Natural Gas in home heating and energy and would help Connecticut reach carbon reduction goals. They also note a number of states already have programs in place for things like this.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Samantha Dynowski, State Director of Sierra Club: They write in opposition of this law. They say that it isn't this bill specifically, rather any law that would permit injections of biogas into gas distribution systems. They note that gas leaks in Connecticut have an adverse effect on global warming. They write saying that all energy plans should be focused on the creation of clean green energy. Saying biogas is not necessarily environmental suitable and should be further examined before enacting any law.

Reported by: William Ginn

Date: 3/15/2021