March 1, 2022

Dear Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and other Members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 176, AN ACT CONCERNING SHARED CLEAN ENERGY FACILITIES.

As a member of the Coalition for Sensible Solar Regulation, an initiative by People's Actions for Clean Energy (PACE) to raise caps on commercial scale solar development, I had hoped for far more than this bill provides. We need to at least double the 50MW cap on commercial projects, also double the 25 MW cap on SCEF projects, and modify the current NRES tariff program to make more VNM projects financially viable.

The very modest changes to solar development caps contained in SB 176 seem to indicate a suspicion of the value of distributed energy resources. So I would like to introduce members of the committee to a new study**, Why Local Solar For All Costs Less: A New Roadmap for the Lowest Cost Grid** (https://www.vibrantcleanenergy.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/WhyDERs_ES_Final.pdf), because it has the potential to change the narrative about how we in CT view the ongoing debate about utility scale vs distributed local energy resources.

We at PACE became aware of the study months ago, but its significance really came into focus for us when we embarked on our initiative to raise caps on commercial scale solar projects. Our hope is that you will take a look at the study and that it will inform your thinking about not just caps on local solar and battery storage, but of all future planning for our electric sector, which will be expanding because we need to electrify everything, from the cars we drive to how we heat our homes. This study suggests that we can't afford to continue thinking about distributed generation as an expensive, boutique solution, when in fact it is necessary to achieve the lowest cost clean energy grid. The savings from achieving that lowest cost grid will be most keenly felt by those who find it most challenging to pay their energy bills. In other words, there is a strong equity component to this issue.

The basis of the study is a newly developed computer model that is far better able to evaluate the best mix of utility scale and local renewable energy resources than current energy planning tools. The results of the modeling were clear. The least expensive way to get to a clean energy sector is by adding copious amounts of distributed solar + batteries to existing and planned utility scale solar, wind and battery storage. This recipe works for among other reasons because it smooths out the demand for electricity by reducing peak demand periods, which are a significant driver of both supply and distribution costs.

PACE will be hosting a webinar on the implications of **Why Local Solar For All Costs Less: A New Roadmap for the Lowest Cost Grid** for Connecticut on Monday, March 7, 11:00am to

12:30, where nationally known energy analyst, Karl Rabago, will be our featured speaker. To register for the webinar, go to https://www.eventbrite.com/e/way-more-local-solar-for-a-strong-affordable-clean-grid-in-cts-future-tickets-273059677847. You can also hear a concise, clear explanation of the study by listening to the Volts podcast episode - **Rooftop solar and home batteries make a clean grid vastly more affordable**, which you can find here: https://www.volts.wtf/p/rooftop-solar-and-home-batteries.

I do not support the permitting electric distribution companies to own solar power generation facilities within the Shared Clean Energy Facility program.

To reduce electricity bills for current and future ratepayers, we need to be far more ambitious about the amount of distributed solar we plan for Connecticut. The economic health of our state and our most vulnerable ratepayers depend on it.

Thank you.

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