

Energy and Technology Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1099

Title: AN ACT CREATING A CONNECTICUT NUCLEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL.

Vote Date: 3/14/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/2/2023

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

[Rep. Holly H. Cheeseman, 37th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR THE BILL:

Connecticut needs to expand its energy infrastructure to satisfy future demand while finding alternative energy sources to help reach its climate goals and renewable targets. Further investigations into the development, procurement, and employment of alternative energy assets are beneficial to Connecticut's stated climate and energy goals. Nuclear energy may provide the state with a viable alternative energy source as they state continues to explore other solutions to achieve its objectives; therefore, this bill would establish the Connecticut Nuclear Advisory Council to promote the expansion of nuclear energy and organize state resources related to nuclear energy.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Claire Coleman, Consumer Counsel, CT Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) – Supports the bill as an effort to study advanced nuclear as the state takes steps to consider alternative energy technologies and the overall reliability of its electric infrastructure. The OCC adds that the Connecticut Nuclear Advisory Council will help ensure that the state is adequately prepared to benefit from nuclear energy by collaborating with its regional and federal partners or securing federal funding opportunities. The OCC recommends that the bill language be modified to include an OCC representative on the Council since it is the sole state agency with statutory obligations to protect the interests of Connecticut's energy consumers.

Commissioner Katie Dykes, CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) – Supports the bill's intent to establish the Connecticut Nuclear Advisory Council that will support the state's existing nuclear resources and advance the development and deployment of advanced nuclear technologies.

DEEP believes this proposal can coexist with the safety-oriented goals of Connecticut's existing Nuclear Energy Advisory Council (NEAC) under Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16-11a. Because the federal government ensures separation of the authorities for safety oversight (e.g., the Nuclear Regulatory Commission) and promotion (e.g., the US Department of Energy), DEEP believes that the NEAC and the proposed Council should maintain their separation. DEEP suggests further that the names of the proposed Council be adjusted to avoid any confusion regarding the roles or responsibilities of the two councils.

DEEP comments further that Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16a-100 directs DEEP to coordinate all atomic development activities in the state. DEEP thus recommends that the Commissioner of DEEP or their designee be included as a member of the proposed Council. DEEP adds that it is currently engaged in nuclear energy policy development, including participation in national organizations and committees. DEEP also recommends that the proposed Council include representatives of municipal interests, environmental groups, and academia, in addition to a representative from industry, to encourage the diversity of the proposed Council.

NATURE AND SOURCE OF SUPPORT:

Cary Lynch, Climate and Energy Policy Manager, The Nature Conservancy – Strongly supports the bill's intent to establish the Connecticut Nuclear Advisory Council that will help the state's existing nuclear resources and advance the development and deployment of advanced nuclear technologies. The Nature Conservancy notes explicitly that the creation of a Council would help maintain the state's existing nuclear facilities, value atomic energy as a clean energy resource, utilize nuclear power to complement the shift to renewables, and set the stage for advanced small modular reactors in addition to other advanced nuclear technologies that will help Connecticut meet its carbon emissions reduction goals. The Nature Conservancy also cites recent national nuclear energy developments that further incentivize the development of nuclear power in the state.

Weezie Nuara, State Policy Director, Dominion Energy – Supports the bill's intent to establish a permanent and independent Connecticut Nuclear Advisory Council to promote the expansion of nuclear energy in the state and support the state's nuclear power resources. Dominion Energy notes that Connecticut has a competitive advantage in exploring nuclear energy since it is home to one of only two operational nuclear power stations in New England. The state may be positioned to benefit from the exploration of expanding its nuclear power assets as it lifts the ban on the construction of new nuclear power facilities. The proposed Council would help the state actualize such benefits by helping businesses, institutions of higher learning, suppliers, manufacturers, agencies, and other organizations cooperate and collaborate, ensuring that Connecticut can make informed decisions about future investments relating to nuclear energy.

Susan Tordella, Eco-Nuclear Solutions – Strongly supports the bill because nuclear energy would be reliable, constant, and affordable means of supplying Connecticut's grid as the state continues to make efforts to reduce its carbon emissions reduction goals.

NATURE AND SOURCE OF OPPOSITION:

Samantha Dynowski, State Director, Sierra Club Connecticut – Opposes the bill because of the safety concerns regarding nuclear power. Due to safety concerns, the Sierra Club

opposes the licensing, constructing, and operation of new nuclear reactors utilizing the fission process. Such safety concerns include the pending resolution of the safety problems inherent in reactor operation, the long-term issues with the disposal of spent fuels, and the possible diversion of nuclear materials for weapons manufacture. Instead, the Sierra Club recommends a reduction of the state's dependence on nuclear energy and the phased closure and decommissioning of commercial nuclear power reactors currently in operation. In addition, the Sierra Club urges the legislature to focus on the rapid deployment of clean and renewable energy – i.e., solar, wind, and battery storage – to achieve clean energy goals and meet greenhouse gas reduction targets under the Global Warming Solutions Act.

Tom Swan, Executive Director, CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG) – Strongly opposes the bill, recommending that the state reconsider its nuclear moratorium. CCAG worries that the proposed Council will be the product of an overrepresentation of industry stakeholders who would not advance the public interest, resulting in an energy policy that produces higher costs for Connecticut's ratepayers.

Reported by: Robert Downes

Date: 3/14/23