

Energy and Technology Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5406

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY TRANSMISSION AND

Title: GRID ENHANCING TECHNOLOGIES.

Vote Date: 3/21/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/14/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

REASONS FOR BILL:

As Connecticut aspires to transition to greener energy technologies, it is imperative that the state study future technologies that can potentially help improve the climate and serve ratepayers. Grid Enhancing Technologies (GETs) have shown increased potential with green energy, as they can improve performance of transmission lines. This bill would establish a task force that would study transmission infrastructure in the state to see if Grid Enhancing Technologies would be beneficial for the state and the climate.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Claire Coleman, Consumer Counsel, Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC): OCC is in support of the creation of the task force because it is crucial to the continuation of cost-effective grid enhancing technology's being deployed to the interest of ratepayers. The funds and time spent on this task force will be greatly beneficial. OCC also would appreciate if the committee gave them a seat on the task force to make sure consumers needs are represented in the upcoming discussions.

Katie Dykes, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP): DEEP is in favor of the bill because of the grid enhancing technology's ability to help ensure that they get the best value for consumers out of existing and new transmissions built in the state and region as the move to a clean electric grid carries on.

Encouraging Comments:

Committee to consider expanding scope of study to incorporate other means of potential transmission technologies which could help make the transition to clean energy more sustainable.

For the committee to provide DEEP with the right to hire a consultant in favor of the task force to help with its work.

Marissa Gillett, Chairman, The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA): PURA presents an informational testimony on behalf of HB-5406. Goes on to elaborate on the members of the task force which include the chairperson of PURA along with a few individuals that represent various stakeholders. PURA will be well represented and positioned to take part on the task force as their chair serves on the Joint Federal-State Taskforce on Electric Transmission.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jacob Lucas, Director of System Planning, Eversource Energy: Eversource is in support of the bill proposal and is thankful for the chance to serve on the task force. Eversource goes on to explain their vast experience with GET's as they have had advanced conductors working for two decades and have the largest operating storage-only microgrid in the country.

Natalie Treat, Director of Public Policy, Northeast Clean Energy Council (NECEC): NECEC is in full support because it will help us acquire more out of the infrastructure that is currently placed. If the bill is successful, the task force will provide valuable needed information to speed up the implementation of GETs which have been well-developed and proven.

Sarah Herbert, Regulatory and Policy Manager & Hilary Pearson, Vice President of Public Policy and External Affairs, LineVision: LineVision is in support of the bill and provides comments on their work with GETs along with the significance of them, DLR, and transmissions.

Peter Millman, Vice President, PACE: PACE is in favor of the bill because it presents the chance to save money and time in advancing a more robust grid infrastructure dictate. Looking into and becoming more familiar with GETs will lay the groundwork for making EDCs to look to less costly and more effective solutions that would benefit to ratepayers.

James Schwartz, Independence Solar: Independence Solar is in support and provides a list of comments which include the efficiency of GETs, the taskforce, EDCs, and Clean DERs.

Aziz Dehkan, Executive Director & Allison Pilcher, Policy Director, Connecticut Roundtable on Climate & Jobs (CRCJ): CRCJ urges the support of the bill and taskforce due to transmission infrastructure being a challenge that must be addressed to complete an economy-wide switch to clean energy. An upgraded grid infrastructure is important in holding up the increased demand for electricity from EV's.

Nathan Frohling, Director of External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy (TNC): TNC is in support because it will enable comprehensive transmission planning to meet future system needs along with being as efficient and cost effective as possible.

Encouraging comments: Recommends that the task force includes an environmental rep from a non-profit with wisdom of the regional transmission system and multi-level transmission planning.

Francis Pullaro, Executive Director, RENEW Northeast: RENEW is in support of the bill because GETs can rapidly and cost-effectively address transmission constraints, reduce congestion, save ratepayers money, and help integrate new renewable energy generation and reduce curtailment of existing generation.

Mike Trahan, Executive Director, Connecticut Solar & Storage Association (CONNSSA): Presents support towards the bill and goes on to bring information on GETs, PURA and Eversource.

Encouraging comments: CONNSSA asks committee to direct PURA to consider the different GETs technologies being used in other jurisdictions and for the electric power companies to report to them on GETs updates.

Shannon Laun, Vice President, Connecticut Conservation Law Foundation (CLF): CLF is in favor and presents details about the task force. CLF makes a comment that it is critical to continue the rapid expansion of transmission across New England to interconnect renewable energy resources and decarbonize the grid in line with state and national climate goals.

Jonathan Geldof, Principal, Advanced Energy United: Mr. Geldof is in support of the bill and provides an article from Transmission Possible which states the importance of transmission and GETs.

Jayson Velazquez, Policy Associate, Acadia Center: Mr. Velazquez supports the bill because of the emphasis on efficient use of transmission assets, opportunity to minimize the need to site new lines, and its purpose in minimizing the price of creating a transmission system with sufficient needs to meet future demand.

Emmanouil Anagnostou, Eversource Energy Center Director, University of Connecticut: The Eversource Energy Center supports the bill and continues to describe their operation and how they are in position to help.

Ian McDonald, Killingly: Mr. McDonald supports this bill because it is crucial that they take care of ratepayers and move from unjustifiable costs when ready alternatives are at hand. It is of great significance to make this energy switch as soon as we can and that we avoid unforced mistakes such as duplicative and unneeded transmission.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by:
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