

I am submitting testimony in favor of HB6551, An Act Concerning Environmental Air Quality.

New Haven needs better tools to reduce our pollution burden. We currently house a fossil fuel power plant in the harbor area in addition to multiple other power plants at local universities and hospitals, a sewage sludge incinerator that releases toxic emissions 24/7 in a residential neighborhood that abuts the industrial zone and a public park where children play Little League baseball, and participate in other sports. Roughly half of the incinerated sewage sludge is from other cities in our state and trucked in by Synagro/New Haven. We also have major freeways bisecting our city that contribute to our current air pollution problems. There are many other point source air pollution sources such as animal shelters (crematoriums), the port area where ships offload diesel fuel to be stored in large fuel tanks and be piped throughout New England (huge amounts of volatile organic compounds are released during these processes) and other industrial processes.

For too long, the State of CT has allowed industries to site their facilities in environmental justice communities without any regard to how many facilities already exist in those communities and how bad their air pollution already is. We need new protections to begin to give real protections to environmental justice communities and say enough is enough.

Couple these concerns with the fact that UI and PURA have put so many barriers in place to prevent shared solar by tenants living in 2-4 unit multifamily dwellings and instead substituted a program, SCEF, that allows wealthy developers to invest in large solar arrays that "serve" LMI residents by offering them a subscription for free. Current sites for these facilities are not near the places where the energy is needed but instead are remote open spaces that could better serve the state by remaining open space. Residential solar development is lucrative and these developers use it as any other real estate investment. Residents might get a small reduction in their bill but nothing compared to what a property owner that installs an array and net meters their solar energy for twenty years would receive. Admittedly, not all landlords would be interested in sharing solar with their tenants but many would, such as those with mother in law apartments or multigenerational families sharing one house but metered separately. These people would have to jump through enormous, expensive hoops to put an array on their rooftop to share with everyone that lives in the house. Solar arrays on small multifamily homes (about 35% of our population) are so rare as to be almost nonexistent.

New Haven has many brownfields, municipal parking lot rooftops and other properties that could provide solar for our residents if they could be allowed to share the solar arrays by virtual net metering with residents through a true shared solar program for LMI renters. It is so unfortunate that New Haven might house a data center increasing local energy demand but be unable to harness behind the meter solar to mitigate the energy demand to its residents. For example, PSEG, Inc. is putting its properties out for bid (the New Haven Harbor Station and the Bridgeport station) in order to pursue renewable energy generation on Long Island? other locations?: Not New Haven. Who will buy it and what will they do with it? What protections would residents of New Haven have if the new buyer were to increase our energy

load over current levels because it's in their permit while at a time New Haven residents can't even be allowed to use our own properties for net metered shared solar for its LMI residents that rent?

I participated in the GC3 working groups all last year and know that there are many good bills coming forward. For the first time we were allowed to make proposals based on equity and environmental justice concerns.

Translating those ideas into legislative law will bring these ideas to fruition so please pass this bill out of committee favorably.

Sincerely

/Lynne Bonnett/

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