

Energy and Technology Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-855

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DECOUPLING OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES
REGULATORY AUTHORITY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND

Title: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

Vote Date: 3/2/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/18/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Energy and Technology, Rep. Gary A. Turco, Rep. William A. Petit, Sen. Rob Sampson, Sen. Catherine A. Osten

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill was raised with the purpose of decoupling PURA from DEEP. The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority has been part of Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for several years now. The goal of this legislation is to separate the two agencies from one another and have them act as separate agencies. The decoupling process would begin on October 1st, 2021 and a report would be released regarding the progress of the decoupling on January 1st 2022.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None given.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Senator Rob Sampson](#): The senator writes in support of the bill. Senator Sampson believes that two agencies have two very different roles and the conflict of interest created in those differences, should prompt them to separate from one another. Says the only way for PURA to act without bias and influence from DEEP is to have them have control of their own agency.

[Leslie Anderson, President and CEO of Propane Gas Association of New England](#):

Writes in support of this bill. Says that the lack of independence of PURA has hurt their ability

to implement oversight and takes away their accountability. Says restoring independence to the agency will help solve these issues.

John Erlingheuser, AARP Connecticut: They write in support of this bill. They make note to say they have no issue with the leadership of both organizations but say that a lack of independence of PURA creates many conflicts of interest. They also make note to say they do not know of any other state who structures their regulatory agencies like this.

Stephen G. Rosentel, President of Leahy's Fuels (SB-855): They write in support of this bill. They raise concerns that PURA's decisions are being weighed on heavily by DEEP. This concerns them in terms of a conflict of interest. They also make a note to say we have some of the highest utility rates and they hope with PURA being independent, they will be able to do their job and be held accountable.

Tom Swan, Connecticut Citizen Action Group(SB-855): They write in support of this bill. They believe that this is the proper way these agencies should be structured and note that they do not think any other state in the country is structured like this.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Cary Lynch, The Nature Conservancy: They oppose this bill. Their main concerns with this bill are that it could undermine the intent of the original bill that created DEEP and PURA. This intent being to help strengthen environmental protections, lower energy costs, and allow for rapid economic growth. They are also concerned the bill may raise costs and could misalign environmental conservation and regulation efforts. They are afraid the decoupling could alter communication and missions between the two agencies.

Reported by: William Ginn

Date: 3/15/2021