

# Energy and Technology Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-952

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS.

**Vote Date:** 3/18/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/4/2021

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill would authorize DEEP and PURA to evaluate and approve proposals that Eversource and United Illuminating Company to construct and operate solar generation facilities

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Marissa P. Gillett, Chairman (PURA)** supports sections 1 and 2 of SB 952. The Authority is currently investigating the development of a statewide electric storage program for residential and non-residential participants as part of PURA's Framework for an Equitable Modern Grid.

**In Section 3, subsection (c), PURA respectfully requests the following modifications in bolded language:**

Any agreement entered into pursuant to this section shall be subject to review and approval by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority **[which review shall be completed not later than one hundred twenty days after the date on which such agreement is filed with the authority]**

**In Section 5, subsection (e), PURA respectfully requests the following modifications in bolded language:**

(2) The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority may authorize an electric distribution company to recover its prudently incurred costs and investments for any solar power electrical generation

facility, as described in this subsection, such electric distribution company builds, owns or operates through a fully reconciling component of electric rates for all customers of electric distribution companies, **[until the electric distribution company's next rate case, at which time such costs and investments shall be recoverable through base distribution rates]** consistent with the principles set forth in sections 16-19 and 16-19e.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Michael J. Ausere-Vice President for Business Development for Eversource Energy** is in support of SB 952 because Section 5 of the Bill authorizes the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (“DEEP”) and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (“PURA”) to evaluate proposals our State’s two closely-regulated electric distribution companies (“EDCs”), Eversource and The United Illuminating Company (“UI”), to construct and operate solar generation facilities

**Jeff Bishop, and I am the co-founder and CEO of Key Capture Energy** supports SB 952 for the following reasons:

- Establishing an energy storage target with interim goals is an effective way to develop the storage market in Connecticut. Clear markets bring developers to the table to compete
- Resource diversity in Public Utility Regulatory Authority (“PURA” or “the Authority”) storage programs will lower costs and advance development of Connecticut’s energy storage market
- Demand charges for “front-of-the-meter,” distribution-interconnected storage make distribution connected storage uneconomic in Connecticut today and need to be fixed
- The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (“DEEP” or “the Department”) should run a procurement to start learning by doing to meet Connecticut’s ambitious clean energy goals

**Julian Boggs-State Policy Director, Energy Storage Association** supports SB 952 because it includes accountability and transparency mechanisms to ensure progress towards the 1,000 MW by 2030 target, including interim targets of 300 MW by 2024 and 650 MW by 2027

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Chelsea Gazillo-Director of the Working Lands Alliance** opposes SB 952 because the acceleration of large-scale solar arrays on farmland threatens the state’s efforts to protect farmland with conservation easements from development.

**Eric Hammerling-Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association** opposes Section 10 of SB 952 because for the last several years, the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection and the Department of Agriculture have worked to balance the need for more renewable energy with avoiding the damage that its development can cause to farmland soils as well as to forests and water quality.

Section 10 of SB 952 would heavily tip this balance toward solar energy development over farmland and forest protection, and we believe this is unnecessary as well as being bad policy especially considering our state's policy to protect farmland and the potential for farmland soils and forests to sequester and store carbon to help mitigate climate change.

**Reported by: Jason Snukis**

**Date: April 5, 2021**