

Energy and Technology Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1170
AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF ZERO-CARBON
Title: RESOURCES FROM ELIGIBLE NUCLEAR POWER GENERATING FACILITIES.
Vote Date: 3/14/2023
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/7/2023
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

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

REASONS FOR THE BILL:

Connecticut needs to expand its electricity infrastructure to satisfy its future energy demands while finding alternative energy sources that will help it reach its stated carbon emissions reduction goals and renewable targets. Further investigation into the development, procurement, and employment of alternative energy assets is needed to assess the potential impacts and benefits of alternative energy sources in the context of Connecticut's stated climate and energy goals. Nuclear power may potentially be utilized as an alternative energy source for electricity generation in Connecticut. Therefore, this bill will require the DEEP Commissioner to study the potential need to procure zero-carbon electricity from eligible nuclear power generating facilities.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Commissioner Katie Dykes, CT DEEP – Supports the bill and highlights the importance of enabling DEEP to analyze the procurement of nuclear energy assets or extending contracts for nuclear power generating facilities before agreements are reached. DEEP notes that it joined PURA to conduct a joint assessment of the Millstone nuclear facility in 2017 when its owner, Dominion Energy, Inc., warned that the facility faced the risk of closure. Following the analysis by DEEP and PURA, Connecticut entered a ten-year contract to support the Millstone facility, avoiding the costs that the state would have affected the state's electric grid and its ratepayers had the facility been retired. In DEEP's 2020 Integrated Resources Plan, several scenarios are included that have Connecticut achieving a zero-carbon electric supply by 2040. DEEP determined that retaining Millstone would help achieve the goal. Therefore, DEEP advises that the legislature enable DEEP and PURA to provide an analysis before moving forward with procurements or contract extensions. The contracting process benefited from DEEP and PURA's analysis previously in 2018.

NATURE AND SOURCE OF SUPPORT:

Cary Lynch, Energy Policy Manager, The Nature Conservancy – Fully supports the bill to promote policies that will further energy “efficiency, sustainability, affordability, reliability, transparency, and safety” (Cary Lynch, The Nature Conservancy Testimony, March 7, 2023). The Nature Conservancy states that nuclear power will help Connecticut reach its energy targets; however, it adds that future policies and agreements must consider the technical feasibility, costs, environmental impacts, social risks, and the regulatory context of nuclear energy in the state. The Nature Conservancy also supports maintaining the state’s existing nuclear power facilities if they meet “stringent safety standards” to help reduce carbon emissions. There are also substantial opportunities to receive funding from the federal level to maintain existing nuclear facilities.

Weezie Nuara, State Policy Director, Dominion Energy – Supports the bill since six and a half years remain under the previous nuclear power purchase agreements. Moreover, Dominion Energy supports enabling DEEP and PURA to conduct an analysis of future solicitations for zero-carbon nuclear power resources in order to secure clean, reliable, cost-effective electricity supplies for Connecticut’s ratepayers in the long term: “Extending the power purchase agreements would extend the grid reliability and energy security benefits of Millstone while providing a long-term financial hedge against high wholesale electricity prices and a cost-effective path to electric sector decarbonization for Connecticut” (Weezie Nuara, Dominion Energy, Inc. Testimony, March 7, 2023).

Josh Szczesniak, Massachusetts resident – Supports

NATURE AND SOURCE OF OPPOSITION:

Samantha Dynowski, State Director, CT Sierra Club – Opposes efforts to increase the use of nuclear energy. The Sierra Club adds that nuclear power presents hazardous risks, is costly, and disincentivizes the development of true renewables like wind, solar, and battery technology. The Sierra Club also notes that DEEP already has statutorily mandated reports for energy procurements and planning, including the Integrated Resource Plan for the procurement of energy resources (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16a-3a) and the Comprehensive Energy Strategy (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16a-3d).

Reported by: Robert Downes

Date: 3/16/2023