Energy and Technology Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1293
Title: AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF ELECTRIC UTILITIES.
Vote Date: 3/13/2025
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 2/18/2025
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Energy and Technology Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill will require the Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to conduct a study concerning the operations, reliability, rates, and regulatory oversight of electric utilities in the state. This bill is important because it will increase transparency, it ensures both a reliable and efficient electrical supply, and it allows for the innovation in sustainable energy solution and supports power grid modernization. Transparency is important because it allows for residents to understand their bills and the actions of the utilities engage in that affect them. The study will aim to offer explanations to residents on the operations of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). This bill will aim to provide regulatory oversight, which strengthens transparency throughout the state.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Claire E. Coleman, Office of the Consumer Counsel (OCC): The Office of Consumer Counsel supports **SB-01293** because it supports further transparency and understanding of public service companies and the regulatory process, which the OCC plays an important role in. As a ratepayer advocate, the OCC reviews line items of rate case applications, and works to analyze current outstanding issues, to improve current record. A brief is then filed, which advocates for the most appropriate outcome for ratepayers in Connecticut. This bill will help the OCC with their mission of protecting ratepayers, as increased regulatory oversight of the electric utilities in Connecticut provides more information that assists their brief decisions. The OCC works closely with PURA and DEEP and does not aim to relitigate decisions made by PURA, but they aim to provide more resources necessary so such agencies can also act in the best interest of ratepayers. This bill will also help the OCC curtail any unnecessary

expenses, giving it the ability to refocus the utilities on investments that are most beneficial to customers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Meghan Portfolio, Manager of Research and Analysis at the Yankee Institute: The Yankee Institute supports **SB-01293** because it will charge the Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to conduct studies into operations, reliability, rates, and regulatory oversight of the electric utilities in the state. Recommendations from the Yankee Institute included were to require the utilities to notify customers of upcoming PURA meeting and decisions that would affect their rates, require PURA to expand outreach efforts, explain the combines public benefits chare. Transparency in the regulatory process is mandatory; the public needs a clear explanation of PURA's decisions and notice of potential increases.

Vincent P. Pace, Assistant General Counsel of Eversource Energy: Eversource Energy supports **SB-01293** because it will provide mutual learning and collaboration on how the utility businesses in the state of Connecticut are funded and operated, and how they can operate more efficiently for the benefit of customers. It is requested that to aide DEEP's study of Eversource, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) should release the final comprehensive management audit that PURA's independent consult prepared. This regards “all or any portion of the operating procedures and any other internal workings of" Eversource and the Connecticut utility companies. Eversource and its affiliates would benefit from seeing the audits conducted by PURA, giving them opportunities to address opportunities for improvements and when filing their rate cases. It is recommended that the final audit report be publicly released so DEEP can leverage this work that was done by an independent PURA-selected auditor, before DEEP spending its limited time and resources performing additional studies.

Cary Lynch, Climate and Energy Policy Manager at The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut: The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut supports **SB-01293** because it will promote energy affordability, reliability, transparency, and efficiency which is essential in Connecticut to reach its climate goals whilst addressing the recent spike in energy prices. Utility prices, especially electric, have been rising in Connecticut, becoming the 2nd highest in the nation. These high rates impeded essential costly technology investments in distributed energy resources (DER) which increase system reliability and resiliency while decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. Suggestions made were to explore how to limit the EDCs ability recoup costs associated with being a part of that EDC. Investigating this would increase ratemaking transparency, along with investigating how the ESI fund has been calculated. Assessing whether interim rate adjustments could be utilized for ratepayers would also make significant improvements. Increase transparency benefits for the sake of everyone.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Lillian Brough, Associate Director of Efficiency For All: Ms. Brough opposes **SB-01293** because the CLM program has populated jobs, made homes safer, healthier, more comfortable while reducing expenses to heat and cool, and funding needs to continue for that program. In Ms. Brough's own home she had air-sealing done in the main areas of the home

conducted by Energy Solutions and felt an immediate difference. This resulted in lower monthly costs as well for energy.

Ms. D'Agostino, Rental Property Owner: Ms. D'Agostino opposes **SB-01293** because this bill will help ruin the apartment rental business for landlords, Hartford has especially overstepped boundaries. She claims that this bill may encourage and necessitate the selling by Connecticut owners to the big out-of-state property owners. She claims that this bill will ruin the rental market in Hartford, and nobody will prosper after this.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Demont Murphy, Energy Conservation Specialist at Energy Efficiencies Solutions (EES): Mr. Murphy's general comments on **SB-01293** were that as a field technician at Energy Efficiencies Solutions for fifteen years he has serviced thousands of homes across Connecticut. EES's mission is to make homes in Connecticut healthy, free of hazardous materials like mold, asbestos and bad air quality. EES lowers energy costs for the ratepayers and makes homes for comfortable and energy efficient. The work done by EES is essential to the environment, and the health and financial sustainability of residents. The CLM residential program needs to be funded.

Bernadette Rutte: Mrs. Ruttes general comments on **SB-01293** were that costs of everything, especially energy and water, have raised exponentially in the state of Connecticut. This will be basic common sense. This bill will address the concerns and needs, especially for the elderly sick individuals.

Alvin Colon, Energy Efficiencies Solutions (EES): Mr. Colon's general comments on **Sb-01293** were that EES helps Connecticut ratepayers save on their heating, hot water, and light bills during the summer air conditioning. EES conducts insulation, air sealing, and provides inspecting for heating dangers.

The following provided general comments for HB-06927:
Lloyd Munroe, Luis Rabelo, Marius Vásquez, Edgardo Mejias, Alma Elder.

The following provided general comments for HB-06927:
Four anonymous.

Reported by: Ciara Smith **Date: 03/21/2025**