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SpecialReport

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2026 Acts Affecting Energy and Utilities

By: Lee Hansen, Principal Legislative Analyst

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www.cga.ct.gov/olr
OLRequest@cga.ct.gov

Connecticut General Assembly
Office of Legislative Research
Stephanie A. D'Ambrose, Director

(860) 240-8400
Room 5300
Legislative Office Building

Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts and special acts) significantly affecting energy and utilities enacted during the 2026 regular legislative session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting Environment, are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website.

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website.

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the General Assembly's website of the Connecticut State Library.

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Clean and Renewable Energy Programs

Fuel Cells in Ansonia

A new law includes provisions related to two fuel cell projects in Ansonia. For one project, the law (1) makes the project eligible for buy-all incentives under the Non-Residential Renewable Energy Solutions (NRES) program and a natural gas rebate, (2) authorizes the state to contract with the project owner and the Green Bank to identify state electricity accounts to be beneficial accounts for any power the project generates, and (3) allows the Siting Council to reopen the petition for the project. For a separate project that was selected in the Shared Clean Energy Facility (SCEF) program, the new law also extends the project's completion deadline by three years (PA 26-76, §§ 29-31, effective upon passage).

Shared Clean Energy Gas Rebate

Prior law generally required each gas company (the Connecticut Natural Gas Corporation, the Southern Connecticut Gas Company, and Eversource) to have a program that gives rebates to customers that use natural gas for a SCEF (for example, a fuel cell) selected to participate in the SCEF program by December 31, 2023. A new law requires the companies to provide these rebates to SCEFs regardless of when they are selected to participate in the program (PA 26-76, § 32, & PA 26-127, § 19, effective upon passage).

Successor Renewable Energy Programs

Three programs currently govern how electric customers who install, lease, subscribe to, or otherwise contract with renewable energy facilities are compensated for the energy and related attributes these facilities generate. Under prior law, these programs (the Residential Renewable Energy Solutions (RRES) program, the NRES program, and the SCEF program) were scheduled to end in 2027 and 2028.

A new law creates a process for the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to establish successor programs and extends RRES, NRES, and SCEF until December 31, 2028, or earlier if PURA issues an order making the successor programs available before then. The act sets a procurement target and related reporting requirements for these successor programs and the existing Energy Storage Solutions (ESS) program. For tariff years starting on and after January 1, 2028, it sets the target at 180 megawatts per year and $85 million per year.

For each successor program (a residential successor program, a nonresidential successor program, and the Community Solar Program), the new law sets requirements for program eligibility, establishing tariffs and rates, energy purchases under the tariffs, and rates that take effect when

tariffs expire. It requires electric distribution companies to offer tariffs under the successor programs for 20-year terms until December 31, 2035, and requires ESS to similarly end on that date (PA 26-127, §§ 1-6, effective July 1, 2026).

Electric Grid and Utility Infrastructure

Double Utility Poles

A new law generally creates a process, including notice requirements, deadlines, and penalties, for public utility pole users, custodians, and owners to transfer their wires and equipment from existing poles to replacement poles and then remove double utility poles (where the existing pole and its replacement are alongside or attached to each other) by January 1, 2029. It also creates various exceptions to its requirements and related penalties (PA 26-12, §§ 44-47, as amended by PA 26-68, § 206, effective July 1, 2027).

Electric Generation and Storage Facility Incidents

This session, the legislature required Siting Council certificate holders for electric generation or electric storage facilities to (1) report major and minor incidents to the council and (2) designate an emergency contact person for the facility. Major incidents include events that require emergency shutoff due to hazardous conditions, require emergency services personnel to respond, or cause an injury requiring hospitalization. Minor incidents are unanticipated or unplanned shutdowns that do not require emergency services personnel to respond.

The act also (1) allows the Siting Council to require that applicants provide emergency services training specific to the proposed facility to local firefighters or other emergency services personnel and (2) requires PURA to convene a working group to review processes on resuming energy generation services after a service shutoff (PA 26-127, §§ 12-14, effective October 1, 2026).

Intentional Damage to Critical Infrastructure

New legislation expands the crimes of 1st and 2nd degree criminal mischief to include intentionally damaging certain tangible property of others, including public services and systems (such as utilities, transportation, communications, emergency response, and other state and municipal systems). Both crimes require the person to have acted with no reasonable grounds to believe he or she had the right to do so. By law, a 1st or 2nd degree criminal mischief violation is a class D felony or a class A misdemeanor, respectively (PA 26-100, §§ 63 & 64, effective October 1, 2026).

Notice Requirements for Certain Excavation Projects

A new law sets advance notice requirements for telecommunication service providers or broadband Internet access providers building any underground facility in the state's public highways, streets, or other public rights-of-way. The amount of advance notice and who it must go to (PURA and the Department of Transportation (DOT)) depends on the project's length and location. The new law requires PURA to publish the information it receives from these notices in a way that is accessible to anyone who may be interested in installing an underground facility in the proposed facility's area (PA 26-20, effective October 1, 2026).

Green Bank

Green Bank Energy Storage Pilot Program and ESS Successor Program Working Group

A new law requires the Green Bank to establish and administer a pilot program, within available resources up to $2 million, to promote energy storage for customers participating in RRES or the Green Bank's Residential Solar Investment Program. The program must be designed to (1) increase understanding of electric system benefits received by all ratepayers from these programs and (2) offset ratepayer costs from net metering credits by encouraging storage behind the meter for customer use. The Green Bank must report on the pilot program to the Energy and Technology and Environment committees by February 1, 2028. The program ends on that date or sooner if the Green Bank submits its report before then.

When the pilot program ends, the new law requires a working group to convene to examine the program's results, analyze its ratepayer benefits, and make recommendations on an ESS successor program. The working group must report its findings to the Energy and Technology Committee within one year after it convenes. It terminates when it submits the report or one year after it convenes, whichever is later (PA 26-127, §§ 7 & 8, effective July 1, 2026, except the working group provisions are effective October 1, 2026).

Siting Energy Facilities

Moratorium on Approving Solar Facilities in Certain Municipalities

This session the legislature enacted a one-year moratorium (until July 1, 2027) on the Siting Council approving any solar facility in a municipality (1) where more than 5.5% of the total land area has solar installations and related solar infrastructure (East Windsor) or (2) that is contiguous with, and to the north of, the municipality described above and has solar installations and solar-related infrastructure on more than 2% of its total land area (Enfield). The new law also requires the

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to recommend specific criteria for equitably distributing solar facility sites in the state (PA 26-127, § 16, effective upon passage).

Siting Council Transmission Project Decisions

A new law specifically gives the Siting Council jurisdiction over combinations of electric transmission line and electric substation or switchyard projects that are designed to (1) accommodate the interconnection of future generation sources that are not yet subject to an interconnection agreement or (2) relieve transmission system constraints to facilitate delivery or power from the future generation source.

When determining whether a public need exists for one of these projects, the new law requires the council to consider whether the project addresses anticipated future electric grid reliability needs, which must be supported by (1) an ISO-New England study or finding; (2) the state's Integrated Resource Plan; or (3) an advisory opinion by the DEEP commissioner stating that the facility is in the best interest of the state's ratepayers (PA 26-127, §§ 17 & 18, effective October 1, 2026).

Solar Energy

Plug-In Solar Panels

A new law exempts certain "portable solar generation devices" from interconnection requirements and limits them to one device behind a customer's electric meter. These devices, also known as "balcony" or "plug-in" solar panels, connect to a building's electrical system through a standard wall outlet to offset on-site electric use. Among other things, the new law requires future amendments to the State Building Code and State Fire Safety Code to consider provisions that ensure safe installation of these devices (PA 26-127, §§ 9 & 10, effective October 1, 2026).

Residential Solar and Energy Storage System Sales

Beginning February 15, 2027, a new law requires sellers of residential solar photovoltaic or energy storage systems to (1) limit in-person residential solicitations to between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., or a shorter period set by a municipal ordinance, unless a customer agrees to a different time and (2) annually report to the Department of Consumer Protection about people who provide financing, installation, or related consumer services in partnership with the seller that include in-person interaction with consumers. Then, starting February 15, 2028, these sellers and their sales representatives must carry an ID and give consumers a handbook which the new law requires to be developed.

Among other things, the new law also (1) specifies that the sale, lease, or rent of one of these solar or storage systems is covered by the Home Solicitation Sales Act and (2) changes the penalties for violating the Home Solicitation Sales Act (PA 26-16, effective October 1, 2026, except provisions related to a task force are effective upon passage).

Smart Solar Permitting Platform

This session, the legislature required the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner to implement a smart solar permitting platform by July 1, 2028, to automatically review applications to build residential solar projects, alone or in combination with energy storage systems, and instantly release a building permit if the project complies with the State Building Code. A smart solar permitting platform is (1) the web-based SolarAPP+ platform developed by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Laboratory of the Rockies or (2) a similar web-based platform the DAS commissioner selects. Municipalities must allow applications to be submitted through the DAS platform or through an alternative automated solar permitting platform that equally satisfies the law's requirements (PA 26-127, § 15, effective July 1, 2026).

State Planning and Properties

Comprehensive Energy Strategy

By law, the DEEP commissioner must prepare the state's comprehensive energy strategy every four years. Among other things, the strategy must consider how Connecticut's energy policies affect greenhouse gas emissions and the state's economy. When doing so, a new law requires the commissioner to consult with the following people or their designees: (1) the economic and community development, agriculture, housing, and DOT commissioners; (2) Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary; (3) Consumer Counsel; (4) PURA chairperson; and (5) Green Bank chief executive officer. It also requires the DEEP commissioner to submit the final report to the Commerce Committee, in addition to the Energy and Technology and Environment committees as already required by law (PA 26-121, effective October 1, 2026).

EV Charging Stations at State Facilities

A new law changes the electric vehicle (EV) charging station requirement for new state facilities projected to cost over $100,000 by generally requiring that 8% of these facilities' designated car parking spaces be installed with equipment that can support future charging implementation, rather than requiring that 20% of parking spaces designated for cars or light-duty trucks be installed with level two EV charging stations. Additionally, starting by January 1, 2029, and then every three years, it requires the DOT, DAS, and DEEP commissioners to jointly submit recommendations to the legislature on an appropriate requirement for future EV charging

infrastructure at new state facilities based on certain considerations (PA 26-63, § 3, effective upon passage).

A second new law allows plug-in hybrid and battery EVs to park in spots with state agency EV charging stations, even when they're not actively charging, at the discretion of the state agency that made the charging station available for public use. Prior law prohibited parking in these spots unless the vehicle was charging (PA 26-63, § 2, effective upon passage).

OPM Energy Policy

This session, the legislature removed an obsolete statutory provision that gave OPM responsibility for all aspects of state staff planning and analysis for determining and evaluating energy policy. Existing law has generally given DEEP jurisdiction over the state's energy policy planning and regulation since 2011 (PA 26-68, § 65, effective upon passage).

Studies and Reports

Advanced Nuclear Energy Workforce Study

New legislation requires the Connecticut Council for Advancing Nuclear Energy Development to study the demand for skilled labor in the advanced nuclear energy industry. The study can include recommendations for legislation to (1) meet the need for skilled trades workers and other services; (2) create opportunities for state agencies to collaborate with interested stakeholders; and (3) promote developing a skilled labor workforce to meet the industry's needs (PA 26-46, effective July 1, 2026).

Agrivoltaics Projects Study

A new law requires DEEP, in consultation with the agriculture commissioner, to study the feasibility of implementing an incentive program for agrivoltaics projects (generally, solar facilities on agricultural land). The study must consider potential project benefits and consequences and make recommendations on various issues such as project size restrictions, permitting processes, and preserving core forest. DEEP must report its study to the Energy and Technology and Environment committees by January 1, 2027 (PA 26-127, § 11, effective October 1, 2026).

Natural Gas Rate Studies

New legislation requires PURA to study natural gas rates and any applicable demand charges for commercial and agricultural natural gas customers who have intermittent peak monthly demand to determine if the demand charge causes a significant number of these customers to be charged rates that do not fairly reflect their gas usage. If PURA determines that the demand charge unfairly

increases rates for these customers, it must make recommendations to the Energy and Technology Committee on how the charges can be recalculated or otherwise applied to the customers (PA 26-75, § 5, effective upon passage).

A separate new law also requires the DEEP commissioner to study the same issue (SA 26-4, effective October 1, 2026).

OCC Combined Public Benefits Charge Report

A new law delays, from October 1, 2026, to January 15, 2027, the deadline for the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC), in consultation with the PURA and DEEP commissioners, to submit a report about the combined public benefits charge on electric bills to the Energy and Technology Committee. By law, the report must describe the line items included in the charge and each item's enabling authority, purpose, costs, and benefits (PA 26-68, § 179, effective upon passage).

Resource Recovery Fee Study

This session, the legislature required the DEEP commissioner to convene a working group to study the need for, and viability and impact of, suspending the resource recovery fee for one or more resource recovery (trash-to-energy) facilities in the state for up to five years. The commissioner must report the study's results and any legislative recommendations to the Environment Committee by January 1, 2027 (SA 26-25, effective upon passage).

Water Company Service Cessation Report

A new law requires PURA, in consultation with the Department of Public Health (DPH), to report to the Commerce, Energy and Technology, and Public Health committees by January 15, 2027, on water company cessation requests. The report must include, for the past two calendar years, a list of each time a water company applied for PURA's or DPH's consent to cease operations and certain details on the application's processing. The new law also requires PURA to open a docket to adopt regulations requiring the authority to give a water company written instructions on the process to request an expedited review of its request to cease operations or discontinue providing water services (PA 26-123, effective upon passage).

Taxes

Municipal Uniform Solar Capacity Tax

New legislation makes changes to the municipal uniform solar capacity tax created by PA 25-173, § 57. Principally, the new law expands the scope of solar photovoltaic systems subject to the tax to include those that are permitted to operate on or after July 1, 2025, but before July 1, 2026, which

is a year earlier than prior law. It also makes these systems responsible for one less year of the tax than those permitted on or after July 1, 2026 (PA 26-134, § 3, effective July 1, 2026).

Property Tax Exemptions for Class I Renewable Energy Sources

A new law makes changes to the property tax exemption provisions in PA 25-173, § 58, including rolling back an exemption for certain Class I renewable energy sources to how it existed before the 2025 act. This new law also modifies a separate property tax exemption created by the 2025 act for Class I renewable energy sources that consist of equipment and devices that primarily collect solar energy and generate energy by photovoltaic effect. Specifically, it limits the exemption to facilities that are permitted to operate on or after July 1, 2025. The new law also makes a corresponding change requiring municipalities to amend their 2025 grand lists and issue certificates of correction to reflect the limitation (PA 26-134, §§ 1 & 2, effective upon passage).

Telecommunications

Firefighter Cancer Relief Account Fee on Telecom Service

This year, the legislature passed a law requiring certain telephone and telecommunication companies to report and remit the monthly five cent firefighters cancer relief account fee when they file a sales and use tax return (PA 26-68, §§ 209 & 210, effective upon passage).

A separate new law also advances the start of the fee from January 1, 2027, to July 1, 2026, and the date by which service providers must give subscribers written notice about it from November 1, 2026, to May 1, 2026 (PA 26-1, § 62, effective upon passage).

Water and Sewer

Apprentice Water System Operators

A new law allows DPH to certify individuals as water treatment plant, water distribution system, or small water system operators after the applicant completes an applicable apprenticeship. To qualify, an applicant must (1) be a state Department of Labor (DOL)-registered apprentice who completed a DOL-approved apprenticeship for the applicable system type and (2) have passed a written exam after completing the apprenticeship. An apprentice must be directly supervised by a certified water operator of the appropriate system type (PA 26-142, § 26, effective July 1, 2026).

DEEP Water Discharge Permits

This session, the legislature passed a law that specifies, for any water discharge permit issued by DEEP, or any regulations adopted, that “discharges from public or private drinking water treatment

systems" includes potable water system maintenance or sampling wastewater (PA 26-124, § 10, effective upon passage).

Investor-Owned Water Companies' Treatment of ADU Connections

New legislation made several changes related to accessory dwelling units (ADUs). This includes extending the law on utility providers' treatment of ADU utility connections, such as water and sewer connections, to cover investor-owned water companies. Under existing law, municipalities, special districts, and sewer and water authorities cannot (1) consider an ADU to be a new residential use when calculating connection fees or capacity charges for utilities unless the ADU was built with a new single-family dwelling on the same lot or (2) require the installation of a new or separate utility connection directly to an ADU or impose a related connection fee or capacity charge. The new legislation applies these same prohibitions to investor-owned water companies (PA 26-7, effective October 1, 2026).

WPCA Late Payment Interest Waivers for Certain Common Interest Communities

A new law allows municipalities to waive some or all of the interest on delinquent property taxes owed by a common interest community that (1) has more than 500 units and (2) is in a Superior Court-ordered receivership. It similarly allows water pollution control authorities (WPCAs) to vote to waive or refund some or all of the interest on delinquent sewer system use charges for a qualifying common interest community (PA 26-68, § 174, effective upon passage).

Miscellaneous

Tenant Utility Payment for Non-Metered Service

New legislation prohibits residential rental agreements from requiring tenants to pay for utilities if there is no separate meter for measuring utilities delivered exclusively to their dwelling unit. Statutorily prohibited provisions in a rental agreement are unenforceable and, according to the Connecticut Supreme Court, landlords may generally estimate their buildings' utility costs and build that figure into rent as part of a rental agreement (PA 26-113, effective October 1, 2026, and applicable to rental agreements entered into or renewed on or after that date).

Zero-Emission School Bus and Infrastructure Grants

A new law modifies the requirement for the DEEP commissioner to administer a grant program to give matching funds needed for municipalities, school districts, and school bus operators to maximize federal funding when submitting federal grant applications for purchasing zero-emission school buses and electric vehicle charging or fueling infrastructure. It instead requires DEEP to give

a portion of the funds necessary for the above entities to maximize any federal funding or other funding or financing for those purposes (PA 26-124, § 4, effective upon passage).

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