

August 27, 2020

Energy and Technology Committee

ETtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Regarding: Tropical Storm Isaias Response and Electric Utility Rate Increases

Dear Members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

I am writing from the general public to submit public testimony for the August 27 general information forum you are holding on Tropical Storm Isaias Response and Electric Utility Rate Increases.

The damage caused on and after August 4 by tropical storm Isaias was predictable, long-lasting, and costly, with power outages in Connecticut lasting more than a week in too many cases.

We live in a warming world in which a changing and increasingly extreme climate will take a devastating toll on human health, species extinction, and unimaginable environmental damage. Humans have caused these changes, as we know, in Connecticut, largely through the transportation sector, which is dominated by lone individuals driving highly inefficient gas-powered cars back and forth across the state accounting for 32 billion vehicle miles traveled in Connecticut in 2016 and increasing.

The second leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in Connecticut is of course the electric sector, which accounts for about 20% of emissions. Not only can we not afford any new fossil fuel infrastructure in the state, including for example plans for highway expansion and the natural gas powered plant in Killingly, both of which will need to be canceled, we need to focus on an innovative job-creating transition away from dangerous fossil fuel and nuclear-based energy towards safer locally generated renewable energy.

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) is a program that allows local governments to procure power on behalf of their residents, businesses, and municipal accounts from an alternative supplier while still receiving transmission and distribution service from the existing utility. The Office of Legislative Research considers CCA one of the major issues of the 2020 legislative session. Enabling CCAs in Connecticut towns would make it possible to offer electricity to area ratepayers at lower prices, promote renewable energy locally, encourage energy efficiency projects, and create jobs. In a February 10, 2020 article in CT Mirror, "A tool for more local control over renewable energy," Peter Millman, Michale Uhl, and Dan Knudsen pointed out that some 20 organizations and four municipalities have already indicated their support for CCA in CT. The next step is to pass enabling legislation at the state level.

The damage caused by tropical storm Isaias has helped us in Connecticut to see that we can no longer afford Eversource's outrageous \$252 million second-quarter earnings, \$1.9 billion operating revenue, and scandalous \$40 million annual executive compensation in 2019. When confronted with Eversource's egregious profits, compounded by the threats of and actual damage done by climate change, and the Governor's executive order that the state needs to achieve a carbon-free electric grid by 2040, the appeal of CCA is crystal clear.

Please use your authority to help guide the state to pass legislation enabling Community Choice Aggregation so our towns can shift away from a corrupt, unhealthy, for-profit energy sector that's costing us our lives, towards one that creates jobs and incentivises efficient, local, renewable energy. Our predicament is bleak, but CCA offers a glimmer of hope.

Respectfully submitted,
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