

Testimony to the the LCO 3920 Legislative Committee Sept 8, 2020

About two weeks before Hurricane Isaias swirled through CT I heard about a new insulation incentive. I decided to give Eversource a call. Their customer service dept was unaware of the new incentive, offering those who insulate their homes \$2.20 per square foot subsidy up from just over \$1 per square foot earlier. Eversource is either too unorganized or intentionally obfuscates the availability of information about these incentives. Either way, it is time to remove their exclusive access to the funds for marketing energy efficiency programs within their service area. A far better approach would be to have the CT Green Bank able to distribute energy efficiency funds since they are committed to providing clean energy and limiting the use of dirty fossil fuels. We need an unconflicted advocate in charge of these programs.

Hurricane Isaias knocked down 3 tall trees on my property, one was uprooted as if by a tornado. The intensity of storms is a result of climate change. Advocates have been asking politicians to transition to a renewable energy future for decades. I have been working on this since the 1980's. The climate change impacts have moved from urgent to dire consequences all over the world and yet there is a torpor in legislative action. Please take strong action to demand Eversource restructure to prepare the grid for decentralized renewable power and remove energy efficiency marketing funds from their responsibilities. It's like "the fox guarding the chickens"

Eversource's website shows that when a customer buys from Eversource they only get 29% renewable energy whereas there are competitive energy service providers that provide 100% wind energy at cheaper prices. With a few clicks, I was able to get Clearview 100% wind provider at a lower cost per KW than Eversource. Still, Eversource relies on the average customer not being willing to do the research to make the switch. The Connecticut Legislature should confine Eversource to delivering a safe and reliable grid and electricity to those who are satisfied to remain their customers even when made aware there are cheaper greener alternatives by a more even playing field

I then inquired about the new \$2.20 energy efficiency funding that I had heard was available. The Eversource representative I spoke to in customer service referred me to the EnergizeCT phone number. Why should customers have to call another number to get information on these vital programs? This level of incompetence on front line communication with the average Eversource customer is UNACCEPTABLE.

**It is time that an open playing field be made available to both for profit and non-profit competitors who should be able to access the funding for energy efficiency in proportion to the amount of projects they have "shovel ready" with customers ready to sign agreements and implement.** The funds should be disbursed through the CT Green Bank and should not be held back by Eversource's bureaucracy or Eversource's advertising objectives.

**Connecticut needs to be in a race to deliver climate change preventative measures, not having the lethargic and disorganized strategies** that Eversource has been deploying for years while it retained a monopoly on delivering on these incentives. Now, I hear that the

insulation incentives will expire if the renovations are not completed until after January 1, 2021. To announce a good incentive in summer and have it expire less than a year later is an incentive design set up to fail. I begged the energy efficiency contractor to come to my home faster than 2 months after my initial telephonic energy audit to provide the in person audit putting in doubt whether a well informed consumer will meet the end of year deadline.

Eversource has spent marketing dollars on self promotion instead of encouraging customer uptake of clean energy solutions. The reason so few Nutmeggers have implemented solar with storage (which would have taken a burden off the grid before these most recent outages) is that Eversource doesn't want less energy on the grid it controls. This is a conflict of interest.

Green jobs will be generated if there is open competition and open access to the opportunity to deliver on promoting these energy efficiency incentives instead of having them "promoted" through a disorganized and uncommitted bottleneck that literally has its primary business to supply fossil fuel generated energy to the public.

It is also vital that CT maintain net metering so the financial incentives for solar are not cut off at the knees. We also need to welcome all solar suppliers who are offering solar with batteries. I was at Costco in Norwalk and was told by a Sunrun representative that CT doesn't allow them to offer solar with storage. Lastly, solar homes should not be mandated to sell all their supply into the grid during an outage. There should be a provision that even if a home or business owner who has installed solar doesn't have storage, they can be off grid and use their independent power until power is restored to their town. This will improve CT resiliency as these storms get more frequent and powerful.

Last please expand the residential solar Investment program. It is vital that people have more options for structuring their investments.

Please consider a tax on soda, plastic bags, or any other "environmental bad" to fund a massive program to renovate public housing and affordable rental housing so low income Connecticut residents won't be facing a choice between feeding themselves or freezing this winter.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please act decisively and pass LCO 3920 to remove barriers from energy efficiency retrofit and solar investment by homeowners and small businesses in CT.

Best,

Diane Keefe

Norwalk, CT 06851