

Sep 7, 2020

**To:** The Energy and Technology Committee

**RE:** Listening Session on the "Take Back Our Grid Act", September 8, 2020

Dear Members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

**Summary:** I understand the frustration of lengthy power outages but am concerned the consequences of the "Take Back Our Grid Act" need to be better understood.

**Further Discussion:**

Curbing Eversource profits: My understanding is rates and profits are highly regulated, and that PURA must agree to most if not all rates. Rates are also set well in advance. Does PURA need more resources to better regulate the market and better communicate rate decisions to CT residents? Eversource profits should be better understood and rates adjusted downward if warranted or perhaps once profits exceed a certain level, ratepayers should receive refunds/credits.

Even as a supporter of the free market, executive compensation is, to be diplomatic, extremely high. I share both anger and frustration in this regard. Eversource should be aware that it contributes to a negative perception of the company and begin to focus more on stakeholders. Reducing compensation would have a small but meaningful impact on consumer bills.

Improved reliability and storm response: We live in a highly forested state. In rural areas a proportionally greater amount of distribution is required compared to urban areas. To eliminate the threat of trees falling on power lines would require a massive amount of tree work. Many would likely object to that, not to mention the impact on electricity bills. Greater staffing for storm response would increase rates as well – particularly the transmission rate - which we all want to decrease. Underground burial, because of its cost, has limited application. Better communication from Eversource and perhaps involving existing capability in storm response such as tree removal services might be good first steps.

Justice for rate payers: To what extent should anyone be held responsible for major storms where the actual impact is difficult if not impossible to predict? Should a weather forecaster be held accountable for an inaccurate prediction? To what extent should homeowners and perhaps communities be responsible for preparing for a storm? We need to help those who are truly in need after a storm, but what is the appropriate way to fund this? If excess profits from Eversource could be used let's see the numbers. Perhaps communities could do a better job of identifying vulnerable people and developing a support system to help during and after storms.

The recent complaints about high electric bills this summer revealed people are very concerned about high electric rates and want them reduced. It seems many of the proposals would increase rates. Before any actions are taken consumers need to understand the impact on their electricity bills.

From this summer's discussions it was also clear that many do not understand their electric bills. Delivery rates increased and the trend is of concern, but by far the greatest contributor to increased bills was the increased kWh used. It is disconcerting that legislative leaders have not been more active in correcting this misperception. It gives the impression that facts are not always clearly understood.

Over the past month I've begun to learn how complicated providing electricity is. There are also new technologies that will contribute to solutions but need to be used wisely. This statement obviously just begins to scratch the surface. As we figure out the best path forward for CT, I ask that we take the time to understand options thoroughly, including realistic cost/benefit analysis, and not rush to judgment.

Thank you for considering my testimony, Fred.