

Dear Chairmen Arconti and Needleman, Representative Ferraro, Senator Formica, and members of the E&T committee,

Thank you for drafting LCO 3920, AAC Emergency Response by EDCs. I appreciate efforts to protect ratepayers from the poor performance of and excessively high compensation paid to energy distribution companies. I lost power for 10 days following Hurricane Isaias, and I pay double to Eversource in delivery costs what I pay for my electricity generation. I'd like to see the energy system become less fragile, and I'd like my bills to stop going up even when Eversource does a poor job.

Connecticut ratepayers pay the second or third highest price in the United States for electricity, a fact that was somewhat understated in a comment at the 9/8/20 E&T hearing that our rates are "on the high side". The guaranteed rate of return for EDCs is one reason why, and another major reason is an over reliance on only two fuels, gas and nuclear power, for the majority, over 90%, of our energy, in addition to a small amount of trash to energy, coal, and the tiny amount of renewable power we actually produce here. The increasing reliance on a monopoly of fuels has increased, not decreased, customer's energy prices, and we need to increase the diversity of our energy sources.

Because Connecticut is a net energy exporter, we have been exporting energy out of state for years, profiting the EDCs but not providing benefit to ratepayers, who suffer excessively high energy prices. Ratepayers have not received an appropriate return on investment from the state's huge investment of ratepayer funds in the expanded use of gas.

The cost of gas is low due in part to the fracking process, which created a glut on the market by bringing gas forth from miles below the earth's surface using explosives, dangerous chemicals and millions of gallons of permanently ruined water, causing earthquakes, human health effects and poisoned aquifers. Gas infrastructure including pipelines leak methane, a greenhouse gas that is much worse than carbon dioxide in the near term. According to the EIA, at least two thirds of the gas coming into Connecticut is fracked. To address the climate crisis now means doing something about methane reduction, and to call for increased methane use at this time of climate instability suggests a misinformed viewpoint.

Connecticut has an abundance of gas piping into our state; two of the three interstate gas pipelines bringing fracked methane into our state were enlarged over the last five years, specifically the Enbridge and the Kinder Morgan pipelines. The third interstate gas pipeline, the Dominion owned pipeline, is planning an expansion including a compressor station in Milford. The demand for fracked gas, to the extent that it exists, was created by our state energy plan, which continues to provide discounts at ratepayer expense and EDC profit to convert tens of thousands to gas equipment for residential and business use, and by approving two brand new gas power plants in Oxford and Bridgeport, and a third, proposed in Killingly.

EDC accountability, grid resiliency, and cost effectiveness can be achieved by halting the expanded use of fossil fuels, soliciting RFPs for local microgrids powered by solar and wind, and transitioning from the current highly centralized system to a distributed grid. The 21st century energy system, to withstand the challenge of climate instability, will be resilient, will reduce GHG emissions that cause climate disruption, and will increase social justice by fostering more job creation than comparable investment in fossil fuels, lower energy prices and local ownership of distribution.

I support the passage of this bill, with the addition of a provision stopping the new fracked gas power plant to be built in Killingly. This new power plant rewards Eversource with a much needed large industrial consumer to sell its gas coming into the state via the enlarged Enbridge pipeline, of which Eversource was an investor. We must work to decentralize the grid, and this project further centralizes energy in the hands of Eversource.

Sincerely,  
Martha Klein  
Norfolk CT