



February 26, 2024

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF:

- **HB 5052** AAC SOLAR ENERGY IN SCHOOLS
- **HB 5232** AAC SOLAR PROJECTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE
- **HB 5231** AAC REVISIONS TO THE STATE'S NON-RESIDENTIAL RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM AND SHARED CLEAN ENERGY FACILITY PROGRAM

To: Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Needleman and Rep. Steinberg, Vice Chairs Sen. McCrory and Rep. Foster, Ranking Members Sen. Fazio and Rep. Buckbee, Distinguished Members of the Energy & Technology Committee

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 5231, HB 5232, and HB 5052. All three bills will help Connecticut achieve the goal of reaching a zero-carbon electricity supply by 2040 and provide more accessible solar power to the people of Connecticut.

The public is eager to benefit from solar energy. In recent years Massachusetts, Vermont, and Rhode Island have all nearly doubled their solar per capita compared to Connecticut.

As gas and oil prices continue to rise, solar and battery storage are readily available, quick to install, and can bring big cost savings for Connecticut residents. The legislature needs to prioritize making the transition to solar easier and cheaper for homeowners, renters, small businesses, schools, and houses of worship. Incentives and policy that supports the transition to solar energy will help residents boost building efficiency and reduce their monthly costs.

Clean Energy is the path to lower, more stable electric rates.

Connecticut must not continue business as usual, locking us into more fossil fuel infrastructure. If we invest in clean energy now, the cost will go down, we will own more of the power generation, and it will keep more jobs and wealth in our state.

This does require upfront investment. There is federal money available TODAY that we can pursue to keep costs down for the ratepayer.

CTLCV supports:

- 1) **suspending the caps** on the NRES commercial program, and charging PURA to administer the program in the best interest of the consumer
- 2) standardizing **local property taxation** of commercial solar
- 3) expanding and improving the **SCEF** community shared solar program (which expires in 2025)
- 4) Increasing incentives to **pair solar and storage**, which has been shown to increase the value of energy because it stabilizes the grid and reduces the need for transmission wires.

The three solar bills being considered by the Energy & Technology committee are part of a larger effort to address our climate crisis. The societal benefits of clean energy are obvious: clean air, jobs, better health. Overlooked is the fact that clean solar energy is also the path to lowering energy costs.

Our neighboring states have embraced the benefits of solar power. Connecticut needs to set more ambitious goals to fully deploy solar energy production to reduce stress on the electric grid and put power back in the hands of Connecticut residents.

CTLCV urges the committee to **SUPPORT ALL THREE SOLAR BILLS** that will directly benefit state residents and support our carbon emission reduction goals.