

Testimony in Opposition to SB 354, An Act Establishing a Green New Deal for Connecticut

Sharon Peterson
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My name is Sharon Peterson. With my father and my brother, I am co-owner of Apple Oil Company in West Haven, CT, a home building and home heating company serving over 8,000 consumers in the greater New Haven area since 1957. Our family also builds increasingly more efficient homes and is committed to energy efficiency. Our industry as a whole is primarily comprised of similar small family-owned businesses, many of which span several generations, and provide great, locally-based customer service. We are committed to improving the energy product we deliver to our customers.

Since 2005, Apple Oil has been buying and selling Bioheat. At a 1.7 percent blend of biofuel with heating oil, our delivered heating fuel is cleaner than natural gas (Source: National Oilheat Research Alliance (NORA) report to the US Congress in 2015). Only biofuels, at higher blends, have the potential to be carbon neutral and to meet to goals of the Paris Accords. I am particularly proud of our industry and our product and have been an active advocate for including biodiesel in the Thermal Renewable Energy Credit program in Connecticut.

The proposed ACT (SB 354) threatens to eliminate the gains we have made in creating and using the future's best source of carbon-free deliverable energy, threatens to eliminate thousands of jobs in the State, adds to the costs of electricity in the State, and, and perhaps most startling, does not provide a cleaner, viable option for energy. Instead, the proposals would put untenable demand on a grid that is fueled by over 50% natural gas, a fuel that cannot meet the State's climate goals. The ACT would put upward pressure on electricity costs in a State that already has some of the highest costs in the nation. Improvements necessary to the grid to handle the increased demand, as well as upgrades to an electric heating system, would cost Connecticut consumers millions, perhaps billions, of dollars.

The State should instead focus on increasing the use of clean fuels for production of electricity; and increase the use of renewable energy such as biodiesel throughout the energy and transportation sectors. Biodiesel is available now and requires little or no cost to consumers. At B100, biodiesel is carbon neutral and can help CT meet its climate goals much more effectively than the proposal of heat pumps. In support of the goal we share with the State of Connecticut of improving the environmental impact of our energy choices, I believe that the State of CT and its residents would benefit from the increase of biofuels and other renewable liquid fuels such as renewable diesel, in the heating and motor fuels sectors.

We know that biofuels, liquids that store energy more efficiently than batteries, can achieve the goals that residents and voters have set for themselves and also do much more. Over 50% of electricity energy is lost in transmission over the grid. These losses are compounded when electricity is stored in batteries, which lose their power when sitting idle. As we saw during the two-week severe cold period in January 2018, deliverable liquid fuels that are stored right here in Connecticut can meet the peak and instantaneous demands for electricity when other conventional and solar sources fail. (As recently as January 2018, 35% of the electricity generated in the NEPOOL distribution area was created using petroleum. Biofuels can be substituted and therefore achieve our environmental goals.) Including biodiesel in the Class 1 designation allows CT to take a more fuel-diversified approach, which will benefit consumers and the environment.

Finally, in order to achieve the best long-term solutions for our State, its environment, and its citizens, we must begin to base CT Energy policy on life cycle analysis rather than emission-only based strategies. Only through a true full life cycle comparison can we assess and make the best choices for the future of those who will be here in 100 years.

Thank you very much for your time.
Sharon Peterson