



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

House Bill 5052

AN ACT SUPPORTING SOLAR ENERGY IN SCHOOLS

Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

Energy and Technology Committee

February 27, 2024

Good morning, Senator Needleman, Representative Steinberg, Senator Fazio, Representative Buckbee and distinguished members of the Energy and Technology Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 5052.

This proposal promotes the use of solar energy in public schools in three ways.

First, it modifies the grant reimbursement calculation for school solar initiatives by allowing certain state funds related to solar energy and energy storage to be applied exclusively to the local share of project costs. Currently, the funds or sustainability rebates offered for solar are applied first to the total project cost, with the state grant and the local district sharing the rebate proportionally.

Second, the bill requires the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to develop a program to encourage solar and energy storage installations in public schools, potentially including a separate tariff for selected projects with an annual cap of twenty-five megawatts and allows the system to be sized for future electrification.

Finally, this proposal requires school districts to consider the Connecticut Green Bank's solar feasibility recommendations for future new construction or renovations if they do not currently use solar energy.

As we look to the growing impacts of climate change and increasing energy costs, DAS enthusiastically supports renewable energy and encourages schools to consider this as they undertake renovation and construction projects. At the state level, DAS recently completed revisions to the Power Purchase Agreement, which allows Executive Branch agencies to participate in no-cost solar projects in collaboration with the Connecticut Green Bank. This proposal would amplify our state's efforts to encourage the use of sustainable energy sources, extending these existing solar strategies to our municipalities through our schools.

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I thank the committee for the opportunity to testify and urge the adoption of this commonsense legislation.