



**Written Testimony of the  
Renewable Energy and Efficiency Business Association, Inc.  
Before the Energy and Technology Committee  
In Support of H.B. 5002, S.B. 468 and H.B. 5789**

**February 21, 2019**

Senator Needleman, Senator Formica, Representative Arconti, Representative Ferraro, and Members of the Energy and Technology Committee, the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Business Association, Inc. (REEBA) appreciates the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 468, House Bill 5002, and House Bill 5789.

REEBA's mission is to provide its members, including solar companies, fuel cell manufacturers, and energy services companies with a unified voice for advocating for the removal of regulatory barriers and establishing legislative-based opportunities to promote the sustainable deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency in Connecticut.

REEBA's comments to the proposed bills are as follows:

**S.B. 468:**     AN ACT CONCERNING THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR  
PANELS ON STATE LAND NEAR PUBLIC HIGHWAYS.

REEBA supports S.B. 468, which would open up vast amounts of underutilized state land near public highways for potential solar energy installation. The land near public highways may be more attractive for solar energy investment because it would not conflict with the conservation concerns that accompany undeveloped land near forests and agricultural areas. Public highway land could be put to good use for Connecticut by installing solar panels that would contribute to the State's energy security and clean energy development.

Installing solar energy facilities next to the State's public highways would also send a highly visible signal that Connecticut is committed to transitioning to clean energy. Neighboring states, like Massachusetts, have been building solar projects next to highways for years, making Connecticut an outlier with an absence of renewable energy projects visible to interstate travelers. This bill would demonstrate to our residents and visitors that Connecticut has a robust solar industry with the support of the state government.

Therefore, REEBA strongly urges the E&T Committee to support this bill, which would promote Connecticut's commitment to solar power and advance our clean energy goals.

**H.B. 5002: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN NEW DEAL.**

REEBA supports H.B. 5002, which would help Connecticut transition to a clean energy economy and expand and create new business opportunities for our state. This proposal could potentially yield enormous economic gains for the State in the form of private investment dollars and job opportunities in renewable energy, as well as reduced costs from greater energy efficiency. Investing in our local energy companies and revising restrictive regulations are also essential components to achieving the state's clean energy goals.

However, this bill could be more effective at encouraging renewable energy if it addressed several obstacles to renewable energy investment in Connecticut. First, Public Act 18-50 restricts rooftop and ground mounted solar arrays to only meet the onsite load of the customer. This is wasteful when many large building rooftops and unproductive open land can host solar arrays that provide a surplus of clean energy beyond the customer's on-site load. PA 18-50 should be amended to remove the onsite load cap.

Second, private investment in renewable in Connecticut has been inhibited by the unnecessary regulatory barriers to building solar on farmland and forestland enacted in PA 17-218. Proceedings before the Siting Council to install solar energy facilities on underutilized land have been slowed or frustrated by PA 17-218's land conservation restrictions. REEBA believes that the Green New Deal must balance the states land conservation needs with the need for greater clean energy resources. One way to achieve this balance is to limit the conservation restrictions to larger projects exceeding 10 MW in size and allowing the Siting Council to consider rebuttable evidence and mitigation plans in its proceedings.

REEBA strongly urges the E&T Committee to consider REEBAs recommendations in creating a Green New Deal for the State of Connecticut that will build a stronger economy and help meet our Renewable Portfolio Standards.

**H.B. 5789: AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEAD BY EXAMPLE PROGRAM.**

REEBA supports H.B. 5789, which would provide updated energy savings targets and added metrics to Connecticut's energy efficiency Lead By Example program. Such energy efficiency programs are an effective method for state agencies to find long-term energy savings. The small investments made in the program have yielded millions of dollars annually in reduced energy costs. However, the program has had limited reach because it currently can only be funded through general obligation bonds. Lead By Example requires new funding mechanisms to be revived and

effectively utilized. REEBA urges the E&T Committee to consider utilizing the Connecticut Green Bank's Energy Services Agreement to finance the state's energy efficiency projects. This would not require additional bonding or financing from the state budget.

REEBA strongly urges the E&T Committee to support this bill with new funding mechanisms to expand Connecticut's energy efficiency initiatives.

REEBA would like to thank the E&T Committee for this opportunity to present comments.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul R. Michaud". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a distinct "M".

Paul R. Michaud, Esq.  
Executive Director