

H.40 - Establishing a renewable energy standard and energy transformation program
House Committee on Natural Resources and Energy
Testimony of Thomas Weiss, February 4, 2015

Dear Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony.

I am a net metered customer of Green Mountain Power in Montpelier. Also a civil engineer with some background and experience in energy matters.

I believe that each one of us is personally responsible for meeting the greenhouse gas reduction goals established by the State of Vermont a number of years ago. As part of that responsibility, I had solar panels installed on my roof three years ago.

I installed them so I could use the environmental attributes of solar electricity: clean, green, carbon-free, and nuclear-free. Thus it is important to me to retain the environmental attributes for my own use on my own way to meeting the green-house gas reduction goals and now to net-zero. My present rate tariff is explicit that I own the environmental attributes.

There are other people who have installed or who will install solar panels for this same reason. Thus it is important that they be able to retain the environmental attributes of the electricity that they generate.

I support and am pleased that the bill allows the owner of the net-metered system to retain ownership of the environmental attributes.

1. I suggest that the application for a certificate of public good for a net-metered system have a check-box to indicate that the customer has received full information on the trade-offs of keeping or of transferring the environmental attributes. The owner of the net-metered system would need to be the one to sign the application. To go along with that, there will be a pamphlet explaining the trade-off between the price of the electricity and who actually has the benefit of the environmental attributes.
2. I suggest that the default condition be that the net-metered customer retains ownership of the environmental attributes. (Sec. 11, p. 38, lines 18 - 21 and Sec. 12, p. 39 lines 16 - 19).
3. I suggest that each individual customer of a group net-metered system be allowed to choose whether to keep or transfer the environmental attributes of that customer's share of the electricity.
4. I am not in favor of the separate pricing of net-metered electricity and of the associated renewable energy credits. However I can think of no persuasive reason for not having a difference. I suppose that as long as the environmental attributes are a commodity, then having a price differential is not unreasonable.
5. I suggest that on the transfer of a net-metering system, that the person receiving the system be allowed to choose whether to keep or transfer the environmental attributes.
6. I suggest a similar system of education and check-off for energy transformation projects. If I were to install an energy transformation project, I would want to keep the credit for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as part of achieving my goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In this case the application would be the one submitted to the electric company for support of the energy transformation project.

Again, I thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony.

Sincerely, Thomas Weiss