

Testimony to the Committee on Energy & Technology

*Concerning*  
**Tropical Storm Isaias Response and Electric Utility Rate Increases**

Submitted by *Peter Millman*  
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Dear Members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

In a recent CT Mirror article, "[Connecticut needs to make big changes in 'who does what' in the electric power industry](#)", my coauthor and I argued that restricting our monopoly utilities to owning and maintaining the distribution infrastructure would force them to focus on their main job. It is the job that we pay them to do and the only one that requires that they be monopolies. Community Power agencies (same as Community Choice Aggregation) can provide default electricity service and modern energy products and services designed to manage demand, as they are enabled to do in nine other states, including New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and California.

If we really want to 'Take Back the Grid', we need to enable Community Power. We can't accomplish real structural reform if we only penalize the utilities for their failures more severely, but continue to leave them doing exactly the same jobs that they have for decades.

What's holding back Connecticut energy policy makers from embracing this important tool for reducing costs and decarbonizing our economy? Respectfully I would submit that it is a lack of familiarity with Community Power and a lack of imagination. **Put another way, everything has changed in the power industry in recent years except for how we allow ourselves to make decisions. Our biggest challenge is evolving beyond the institutional and cultural inertia that defines what monopoly utilities do and how they are regulated.**

Now more than ever, with the need to lower costs and decarbonize, it is a strategic imperative that governance becomes nimbler and more operationally-informed in order to address how technology is changing in the power sector. Enabling Community Power would set this process in motion for Connecticut. Other states are doing it and we can, too.

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