

4 February 2025

Testimony on H.B. No. 6780, S.B. No. 1193,

Good afternoon, Chair Needleman, Chair Steinberg, members of the Energy and Technology Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a testimony today. My colleague Volodymyr Gupan and I, Charles R. Venator-Santiago, are here on behalf of the UConn Puerto Rican Studies Initiative (<https://puertoricanstudies.clas.uconn.edu/>) to offer some recommendations for *H.B. 6780*, and *S.B. No. 1193*. We are concerned with the impact that these bills will have on Puerto Rican and other rate payers in the state of Connecticut.

H.B. 6780

H.B. No. 6780 is an important step forward in energy transparency. However, to advance discussions and transparency related to renewable energy generation in Class I renewable energy sources, we ask you to consider a change to the current language of the bill in lines 14 through 17 by adding the following language:

“complete list of both in-state and out-of-state facilities providing Class I renewable energy under Connecticut’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) with the prior year’s megawatt-hour sales to Connecticut customers and utilities, along with the price per kilowatt-hour charged in the same period.”

There is no need to keep this information out of the public eye, Connecticut residents deserve to know how much we are all paying for renewable energy and be able to support Connecticut’s green energy policies with full and clear understanding of what they are paying.

S.B. No. 1193

S.B. No. 1193 removes the limits on the ability of PURA commissioners to make unilateral decisions. The legislature should establish a wide but strict regulatory framework that ensures the highest standards of work ethic and conduct but does not

impede PURA's ability to effectively regulate markets to the benefit of all of its stakeholders. SB 1193 does not do it and relax standards of conduct instead.

We recommend the adoption of the following:

1. We recommend that the legislature keep an existing statutory requirement that PURA has to have 5 members at all times, and that a 5-member commission should also be a quorum for all substantive rulings, rate cases and most, public benefit programs, and most permitting rulings. Each commissioner should be appointed a specific utility track: natural gas, water, electricity or telecommunications. The commissioner without a specific track would be managing general administrative issue and conduct general management of PURA staff, best practices are to combine chairmanship with administrative track.
2. Commissioners are nominated for 6-year terms.
3. The PURA chair should be elected for two-year terms by the PURA commissioners, on the first day of an odd new year.
4. Legislature should add a 30 day statutory requirement for the governor to appoint an interim commissioner when the vacancy arises. Such interim commissioner would serve in an interim role and only have a tie breaking vote capacity in a 5 member PURA but their vote would still satisfy a quorum requirement.
5. Interim commissioners can serve a maximum of 8 months if appointed between legislative sessions. If appointed during the session it is responsibility of legislature to confirm such commissioner by the end of legislative session. If the governor fails to nominate a new commissioner in 30 days, then the Speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader or chairs of Energy and Technology committee will name a compromise interim commissioner.
6. If legislature fails to confirm interim commissioner by the end of its session, and interim commissioner served for more than 60 days, such commissioner is confirmed automatically.
7. Commissioners missing three consecutive voting days without remote participation should vacate their positions. Exceptions to this rule include regular

state guaranteed vacation time, state guaranteed sick time,
parental leave, state guaranteed leave to take care of sick family members, or
bereavement leave

8. In order to ensure transparency and accountability, unless the session includes a designated public hearing, all PURA meetings should be observable by public.

As currently written, *S.B. No. 1193* does not ensure a fair and transparent regulatory framework.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our recommendations and we welcome your questions.

Sincerely,



Charles R. Venator-Santiago
Director, Puerto Rican Studies Initiative
Director, El Instituto: Institute for Latino/a, Caribbean
and Latin American Studies
University of Connecticut