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April 27, 2021

Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee,

My name is Barry Hobbins and I am the Public Advocate with the Office of the Public Advocate and I am here today to testify neither for nor against LD 989 “An Act Regarding the Procurement of Renewable Natural Gas by Gas Utilities.”

The OPA is hesitant to lend its support to this piece of legislation due to questions the office has after reviewing the bill. First, concerning the language:

- Is the timing of the allowance of costs (sub-1) matched with the timing for the allowance of the use of the gas (sub-8)?
- Should the addition in sub-1 really be moved to the second sentence of the subsection so as to not change the meaning of the first sentence?

We have the following questions about definitions and costs:

- Are the costs limited to those related to the gas actually allowed to be sold?
- What are costs “associated with the procurement”? Is that so broad as to allow unintended costs to be included? What is intended to be included? What would the production and purchase costs be? Do other states allow this?
- Will there be a downward adjustment in other costs or will there just be an increase attributable to the renewable natural gas costs?
- Is the definition of “renewable natural gas” offered a commonly accepted/used term here or in other jurisdictions? Does it cover the types of gas likely to be sold here?

Additionally, the Office of the Public Advocate would like some clarity on if this bill would have any impact on renewable natural gas projects such as Summit Natural Gas's methane digester initiative currently underway in Clinton.

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 989, and will be present at the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,



Barry J. Hobbins
Public Advocate