

The residents of Hollis approved this exception by a majority vote at a town meeting despite very few of them taking advantage of the exemption. Why would the state want to eliminate something approved by the majority of town residents. The state did not make it mandatory to provide the exemptions. Some at the state level now want it to be mandatory to remove them. Leave it to the towns.

Following are from a responses to my email to my state rep with my follow-up comments (indented)

State Rep - Because towns must still raise the same overall amount to fund municipal and school services, is it appropriate for certain property improvements to be exempted when that exemption shifts the tax burden to other taxpayers?

My Reponse - There are many things that are not equitable in our tax system (state, local and federal). In the case of residential solar, everybody benefits when a homeowner puts solar on their property. The [2023 addendum of New Hampshire Value of Distributed Energy Resources](#) performed under direction of the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and facilitated by the New Hampshire Department of Energy found that residential solar results in an avoided cost of up to \$.19 per kWh in avoided cost. This benefit to all dwarf the property tax reduction associated with tax exemption. There are also environmental benefits that arguably have value to all.

State Rep - When exemptions exist, are residents who chose not to install solar, or who could not afford to do so, effectively paying more to offset that excluded value?

My Reponse - All benefit in the form of lower electricity costs/cost avoidance.

State Rep - Should the property tax system be used to favor one specific type of improvement, or should it remain neutral and treat improvements consistently, regardless of technology?

My Reponse - This and the other exemptions were voted on by the town. What about exemptions for Historic Agricultural Structure (Barn) Preservation Easement — RSA 79-D, Historic Structure Rehabilitation — RSA 79-E, and Discretionary Preservation Easements — RSA 79-C? I am not suggesting I am against any of these, but they certainly don't have the same value to all in the community and have a much less objective benefit.

There is also an exemption for wind (addressing technology improvements).

State Rep - How do we account for the impact on fixed-income residents, including seniors and long-time homeowners, who may have limited ability to invest in exempted improvements but still bear the redistributed costs?

My Reponse - This group benefits from others putting solar on their homes in the form of the redistributed avoided costs in their electric bill. The share in the redistributed benefits without having to make the investment.

“Two wrongs do not make a right”, but the groups you mention are also subsidizing other property tax exemptions and expenditures they may not be able to afford. Including: Historic Structure Rehabilitation, Discretionary Preservation Easements and Historic Agricultural Structure (Barn) Preservation Easement; and purchasing of conservation land, expansion of recreation facilities, school expansion, etc. Not everybody has an historic barn or kids in school limiting the direct benefit they receive.

Is it more appropriate for energy policy goals to be addressed through direct incentives and programs, rather than through permanent exclusions within the local property tax base?

My Reponse - I agree with you on this. The state eliminated the funding for the incentives that once existed at the state level and the Federal government eliminated most of those at the federal level. The PUC should be imposing compensation from the utilities to those installing distributed energy (solar, wind, other) and batteries. Given that current state government is not operating on facts and data, some recognition of the benefits has been recognized at the town level and approved by a majority of the residents at town meetings, most of whom do not have solar.