

Government Administration and Elections Committee PUBLIC HEARING
Friday, March 16, 2007
Testimony by House Speaker James Amann
in SUPPORT of
HOUSE BILL 6250 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE FLEET

HB 6250 requires that by 2012, 100% of cars and light duty trucks be alternative fuel vehicles, hybrid vehicles or plug-in electrics.

Good morning Chairs and members of the Committee. I am before you this morning to voice my strong support for **House Bill 6250 An Act Concerning the State Fleet**. If fuel diversification is one of the goals of this state, then *the state* must lead by example.

As of model year 2001, the Federal Government required that 75% of Connecticut's state fleet be Alternative Fuel Vehicles or AFVs. Under the Federal Energy Policy Act, *alternative fuels* include natural gas, propane, pure biodiesel, hydrogen, ethanol and electricity. Strangely, the federal 75% law does not allow for the purchase of hybrid vehicles. The way the Governor and her predecessor decided to come into compliance was by buying flex fuel vehicles which could be fueled with gasoline or with ethanol. The ethanol product, known as E85, is a blend comprised of 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline. Fast Forward to 2007: today there are roughly 1600 state vehicles that can be fueled with ethanol (E85). *The problem is that they are not fueled with ethanol; they fill up on gasoline.* It is estimated that E85 accounted for less than 3% of the fuel actually used by the E85 vehicles. More than 95% of the fuel used in the ethanol vehicles was gasoline, defeating the purpose of *energy independence* legislation.

This is due in large part to the fact that currently there is no readily available supply of ethanol in Connecticut or in the North East and is another striking example of a failure of vision and policy at the national level. This *one size doesn't fit all* energy policy has done little to nothing to reduce our dependence on oil.

While ethanol can be part of the solution, Connecticut must also look to increase its use of hybrid, biodiesel, and hydrogen vehicles. This is particularly important because the state is trying to build industries in these areas. As I have said before, Connecticut has a responsibility to formulate and enact a comprehensive long term energy policy.

HB 6250 requires that by 2012, 100% of cars and light duty trucks be alternative fuel vehicles, hybrid vehicles or plug-in electrics. This will include Public Safety vehicles and DOT vehicles, where feasible. HB 6250 also requires the DEP to determine whether Connecticut qualifies for exemptions from the Federal AFV requirement so that it may purchase more hybrid vehicles. Section 3 of the bill, meanwhile, establishes a pilot program to increase the use of hydrogen powered vehicles. 6250 also requires DEP and DAS to develop a plan to increase the use of the two ethanol pumping stations that are currently operating in Newington and in Danbury. Moreover, in the coming weeks, the US Department of Energy will be issuing regulations explaining procedures for applying for a waiver pursuant to section 703 of the Federal Energy Policy Act of 2005. I hope that this waiver will allow the state some flexibility under the Energy Policy Act, and I look forward to hearing from DAS as to how Connecticut can use this waiver to diversify the types of fuel state vehicles use and reduce the state's overall dependence on foreign oil.

No single person has a monopoly on good ideas. And to that end, I look forward to working with anyone who is interested in diversifying the fuel types and energy sources *actually* used by the state fleet, instead of complying with the letter of a shortsighted federal law WHILE failing to act in the *spirit* of true Energy Policy reform, to which I know we are all committed. I again thank the Committee and will now try to answer any questions that members may have.