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TESTIMONY OF
THE UNITED ILLUMINATING COMPANY
Before the Energy & Technology Committee
On
RAISED BILL 5327 – An Act Concerning Utility Service Termination
Legislative Office Building
February 19, 2008

Good morning, Senator Fonfara, Representative Fontana, Senator Herlihy, Representative Williams and members of the Energy Committee. My name is George Balsamo and I am the Meter Security Manager for The United Illuminating Company. I am here today to express UI's strong support for raised **Raised Bill 5327– An Act Concerning Utility Service Termination.**

The ability of public service companies to access our equipment for purposes of maintenance, inspection, testing, removal, exchange, and the like is very important to us and our customers. Utilities in the Northeast have a significant portion of revenue metering located indoors. It has become increasingly difficult for UI and other companies to access our meters and related facilities despite many attempts to notify residents and building owners of this need.

It's a fact that the cost of energy has increased significantly to our ratepayers. We do our best to mitigate these increases, including work relating to meters. The examination, testing and associated meter work is more important than ever as we attempt to disconnect meters that show unauthorized electricity consumption and inspect and maintain meters so that we can correct meters that may not be

operating properly. The costs of unauthorized use of utility service become embedded in the rates of all customers.

The advent of automatic metering allows utilities to measure energy more reliably than ever before. It is important to our customers and UI that this reliability be maintained. In multiple family dwellings in our highly urban territory, access by utilities has become more difficult. This is partly due to the unavailability of residents to provide access. Owners of these dwellings have historically assisted utilities in this access issue, yet it is alarming to see an increasing number of owners reluctant to provide us access to perform our public service duties. This reluctance results in additional costs, because the utility is unable to access its equipment, which results in revenue loss. HB 5327 seeks to assign the ongoing costs of not providing access to our facilities, to the entities who effectively control access to the facilities - owners, agents, lessors or managers of multiunit buildings.

The provisions of HB 5327 were considered favorably by this Committee in the 2007 legislative session. The House of Representatives adopted the Bill, but it was not considered by the Senate before the session adjourned. The 2007 Bill as adopted by the House had some language conflicts as outlined in the Bill's analysis by OLR and comments by LCO. The conflicts related to timelines for assigning costs to the owner, lessor or manager who does not provide prompt access to our facilities. The language of HB 5327 still has the conflicting provisions. UI has developed language that corrects the timeline conflicts. We have provided the proposed language to representatives of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners, and they are in concurrence with UI's proposal. Earlier we also provided the language to the Committee's leadership. The language specifies the number of days

afforded the landlord or manager to provide access. The number of days in lines 74 and 127 must be consistent to avoid confusion. We suggest that the 10 day time period is appropriate.

The United Illuminating Company also supports the provisions of Section 1 of HB 5327 bill that seek to ensure that only the customer of record or the customer's authorized representative can request a voluntary termination of service.

For these reasons, The United Illuminating Company strongly supports **Raised Bill 5327– An Act Concerning Utility Service Termination** and urges the Committee to give it a Joint Favorable Report.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will try to answer any questions you may have.