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Good morning Chairman Fonfara, Chairman Fontana, Senator Herlihy, Representative Williams and members of the Energy and Technology committee. I would like to thank the committee for taking the time to hold this public hearing on House Bill 5681, *AAC Fuel Cells*. My Caucus and I feel this is one of the most important pieces of legislation the General Assembly could make law this session. This bill has the potential to change not only how we produce energy, but also how we provide transportation. People much smarter than I can explain to you how fuel cells leave no carbon footprint which is beneficial to our environment and our health. And, the potential for job creation and market stimulation in HB 5681 are great for our economy.

The bill before you dedicates \$200 million in bonding (\$50 million per year for four years) for a fuel cell program that would be established within the Department of Transportation. These funds would be used to: 1) contract with a Connecticut business to mass-produce fuel cell powered transit buses, 2) transition to the use of fuel cells at Bradley International Airport, and 3) establish up to three hydrogen fueling hubs in the state.

I know that there are other economic development proposals out there to research areas such as nanotechnology. And, we should absolutely invest in these types of endeavors. However, fuel cell technology is researched, developed, tested, and proven. And right here in Connecticut, we have about 20% of the world's fuel-cell-producing workforce. This proposal is the first step to making Connecticut not only a leader in the use of one of the most promising, environmentally-friendly alternative fuels, but also the world leader in the production of fuel cells.

Our Vision

The one piece of this proposal that is most exciting is the prospect of converting Bradley International Airport into the first "green" international airport in the world. I am told that an airport operation has the single largest carbon footprint of any type of operation. Imagine transforming Bradley into a fuel-cell powered airport with virtually no carbon footprint. Using fuel cell powered buses to shuttle airport customers is one key aspect to making Bradley "green". These shuttles would run from the terminals to Hartford, Springfield, and even the casinos in Southeastern Connecticut. The airport would also be

equipped with fuel cells that are capable of powering all of the facilities at the airport, including the terminals, maintenance buildings, and other stationary facilities, as well as service vehicles. As more and more people begin to look at the carbon footprint created by the products they consume, having a "green" airport would be a strong marketing tool for *Bradley International Airport*. Bradley could be the transportation hub for those wanting to travel in an environmentally friendly way to New York or Boston. As the need grows, perhaps shuttles to New York and Boston would be the norm.

With regard to the state's mass-transit system, imagine if the New Britain to Hartford busway, which will be opening in less than five years, provided transportation to all of its riders with no petroleum used to power its buses with zero emissions. This is what a fuel cell transit bus fleet could accomplish. Our bill would provide for the investment to begin changing over our mass transit bus fleet to fuel cell powered buses. The average life span of a transit bus is twelve years, so it is realistic to think that within twelve years, nearly all of our state's busses would have zero emissions.

In order to ensure a seamless transition to a broad use of fuel cell powered vehicles throughout the state, a few hydrogen-refueling stations would be required in various parts of the states. Our intent would be that these stations be owned and operated by private companies, just as our gas stations are today.

The installation of these refueling stations would be an important step to show our residents that we support them purchasing hydrogen powered cars as well. Mercedes-Benz has just started advertising their first hydrogen car this year and Chevy is planning on releasing their first next year. Our residents could know they could look to purchasing one in the future because our state is providing for the necessary infrastructure. Instead of standing in the way of our residents trying to do right by the environment, we would be encouraging them to transition from fossil fuel energy.

The House Republicans believe this is an important proposal that could lead our state and country in the right direction on a lot of fronts. First and foremost, it will begin the process of changing the way we get our energy from dirty, polluting petroleum to clean, emission-free sources of energy. .

With Connecticut being at the forefront in this technology, it will not only be beneficial to our environment, but also our economy. As the fuel cell industry grows, so to do jobs in Connecticut.

Thank you for holding this hearing and I ask your committee's Joint Favorable passage of HB 5681, *AAC Fuel Cells*.