

TESTIMONY OF

THE CONNECTICUT COALITION OF PROPERTY OWNERS

BEFORE THE
LEGISLATURE'S ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
1:00 PM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009
ROOM 1B, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING

Good afternoon. My name is Marshall R. Collins. I am appearing in my capacity as Counsel for Government Relations for Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners ("CCOPO"). CCOPO is the largest landlord, property owner organization in Connecticut. CCOPO has chapters in Stamford, Bridgeport, Hartford, East Hartford, Manchester and members in numerous other communities. The Connecticut Association of Real Estate Investors is also a member of CCOPO. Collectively, CCOPO members own more than 20,000 rental units throughout Connecticut.

I am here today to request that the Committee amend HB 5694 AAC Utility Service Termination. HB 5694 should contain the language of *2008 Substitute House Bill 7250, File Copy # 482*. The language of last year's bill reflected a carefully constructed compromise between landlords and public utility companies. CCOPO supported *SHB 7250, File 482* and wishes to support the same language again this year.

CCOPO and the utilities agreed that responsible landlords or property owners should grant access to public utility meters after receiving a written notice from the public service company.

The agreed upon procedure was to be as follows:

- 1) The utility should provide a written request for access to the meter.
- 2) If the landlord has effective control of access to the meter, the landlord should grant access within ten days of such request.
- 3) If the landlord fails to grant access within the ten day period, the landlord will be liable for the utility's costs prospectively from the eleventh day forward.

The language of *HB 5694, LCO 2685* has the language of last year's File Copy, except for Section 2(g) which is reflected in lines 106-126. It appears that the new language inadvertently omitted the prospective liability provision which reflects that the liability begins on the eleventh day after the written request.

The following is the language from the 2008 File Copy which should be included as Section 2(g) in this year's bill, *HB 5694*:

(g) The owner, agent, lessor or manager of a residential dwelling shall be responsible for providing a public service company, electrical supplier or municipal utility or heating fuel dealer access to its meter or other facilities located on the premises of the residential dwelling promptly upon written request of the public service company, electrical supplier or municipal utility or heating fuel dealer during reasonable hours. If such owner, agent, lessor or manager controls access to the meter or facilities and fails to provide such access within ten days of reasonable written request of the company, supplier, utility or dealer, the owner, agent, lessor or manager shall be liable for the costs incurred by the company, supplier, utility or dealer in gaining access to the meter and facilities, including costs of collection and attorney fees. If the failure to provide access delays the ability of the company, supplier, utility or dealer to terminate service to an individually metered or billed portion of the dwelling, the owner, agent, lessor or manager failing to provide access shall also be liable for the amounts billed by the company, supplier, utility or dealer for service provided to the individually metered or billed portion of the dwelling for the period beginning eleven days after written request for access and ending when access is provided by such owner, agent, lessor or manager.

CCOPO wishes to acknowledge the work of the United Illuminating Company in reaching this compromise. **CCOPO supports the above substitute language for HB 5694.**

This completes my testimony. Thank you for your consideration.