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Comments Regarding Bill #1132

AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY INEFFICIENT STATE BUILDINGS

Before the Energy and Technology Committee

March 17, 2009

Prepared by Shirley Bergert¹

This bill is very similar to section 2 of Bill # 1131 and, if the committee decides to proceed with the concept, these will need to be reconciled.

Cross subsidization by electric ratepayers for conservation of other fuels should be limited. The bill section proposes creation of an "municipal and state energy efficiency and improvement program" for government facilities. The program would be financed by electric ratepayers, but would be fuel blind. While fuel blind efficiency programs are likely to be the most effective efficiency efforts, they generally should be funded from the fuel sources where efficiencies are being developed or implemented. Otherwise electric ratepayers with the highest electric bills will pay disproportionately for conservation that offers limited or no benefit to them.

The state budget implications of the bill should be carefully considered. Unlike section 2 of Bill # 1131, this bill allows a state agency responsible for the energy costs of a facility participating in the program to keep twenty-five per cent of the net savings over the first three years of a funded project. These funds will not be factored into state budgeting process for the agency. While it is understandable to create incentives for conservation, the implications of this provision should be carefully considered during a period of severe budget constraints.

¹ Shirley Bergert serves: as the residential representative on the Energy Conservation Management Board overseeing the expenditure of ratepayer conservation funds in Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16-245m); as the low income representative on the Fuel Oil Conservation Board (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16a-22); on the Low Income Energy Advisory Board (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16a-41b); and on the Advisory Board of the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University.