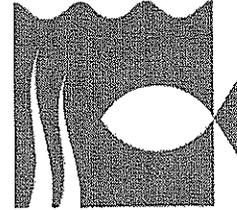


**Connecticut Fund
for the Environment**



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Connecticut Fund for the Environment

**Public Safety Committee
Public Hearing
February 3, 2009**

Submitted by: Charles J. Rothenberger, Staff Attorney

Comments on:

**RB 6284: AAC Adoption of a Model Energy Code and Green
Building Standards**

Connecticut Fund for the Environment ("CFE") is a non-profit environmental organization with over 6,500 members statewide. For more than twenty-five years, CFE has used law, science and education protect and preserve Connecticut's natural resources.

The built environment has a profound impact on the natural world. In Connecticut, the building sector is responsible for 40 percent of the state greenhouse gas emissions. Clearly, if the state is to meet its climate change reduction goals, more energy efficient buildings are essential.

Although Connecticut has been recognized as a leader when it comes to energy efficiency, it has lagged in a couple of important areas. According to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) 2008 State Energy Efficiency Scorecard, the failure of the state to keep pace with the most current model energy codes and the lack of enforcement of its energy code saw Connecticut's standing drop from first place last year to third place this year. While the state ranked high in the area of utility efficiency and the promotion of combined heat and power, it ranked in the bottom quarter of states with respect to the adoption and enforcement of building energy codes.

While RB 6284 is a step in the right direction towards rectifying that failure, there are several significant defects. First, the legislation should specify the level of energy performance that will be required. Having spoken with several energy and building professionals, CFE believes that a target of twenty-one percent better, in the case of new construction, or fourteen percent better, in the case of major renovations, than the most current Connecticut State Building Code is the appropriate target.

Second, the legislation should specify the class of buildings subject to the enhanced energy performance requirements. CFE believes that buildings should be identified on the basis of size, rather than cost. CFE believes that these performance standards should apply to residential buildings that are at least 4,000 square feet and non-residential buildings that are at least 20,000 square feet.

This bill represents a step in the right direction, and CFE hopes that the legislature addresses its current defects and that it will continue to improve as it moves through the committee process.