



GrowJobsCT

MANUFACTURING MAKES CT'S FUTURE

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Testimony of John Harrity
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Supporting Proposed Bills:

HB 1094 – AN ACT CONCERNING HYDROGEN REFUELING STATIONS

HB 6650 – AN ACT CONCERNING ZERO EMISSION BUSES

Transportation Committee
March 11, 2009

Senator Defronzo, Representative Guerrara, members of the committee: my name is John Harrity. I serve as Director of GrowJobsCT, a coalition of business, labor and community groups, along with elected officials, that focuses on the need to sustain and expand manufacturing jobs in the state of Connecticut.

I am here today to speak in support of two proposed bills: **HB 1094 – An Act Concerning Hydrogen Refueling Stations** and **HB 6650 – An Act Concerning Zero Emission Buses**.

HB 1094 would mandate the placement of hydrogen fueling stations on the Merritt Parkway and other state highways. With this legislation, we would take national leadership on an initiative that other states and other countries are pursuing – the establishment of a “hydrogen highway” for fuel cell powered vehicles. Connecticut is strategically located to be the lynchpin in a hydrogen transportation route from Boston to Washington DC. This introduction of zero emission transportation helps not just our state, but our nation, as we struggle to reverse global warming and limit our dependence on foreign oil.

HB 6650 mandates that 10% of all new transit buses purchased by the Connecticut Department of Transportation be zero emission fuel cell buses. This is another initiative with both benefits for the people of the state as well as global impact. With this bill, we can begin to make a real impact on improving air quality, making mass transit more appealing and moving away from fossil fuels.

Both bills combine our need to combat global warming and reduce imported oil consumption with another major imperative for Connecticut: to appropriately support the growth of Connecticut jobs, especially in the field of renewable energy. By stipulating the use of Connecticut-manufactured hydrogen fueling technologies and zero emission buses, this legislation will put hundreds of people to work in well-established Connecticut companies, like UTC Power in East Windsor and Avalence of Milford.

In regards to the UTC Power bus, it opens the possibility of bringing to our state the work of installing and integrating the fuel cell into the vehicle, work we presently do not do here.

Clearly, the cost of fuel cell buses and hydrogen fueling stations is expensive. But any cost/benefits analysis has to include the impact on public health, and lower societal costs for medical treatment, lost productivity and other savings associated with cleaner air.

The issue of cost vs. benefits also shifts dramatically when the manufacturing of the equipment is done here in Connecticut, generating direct employment, a significant "ripple effect" of indirect employment, and increased tax revenues.

Finally, as with any new technology, increased orders are crucial to creating the economy of scale necessary for lowering production costs and the price of the product. These proposals would have the added benefit of helping the Connecticut companies involved to do just that – leading to more sales globally, and more employment here in Connecticut.

There has been a lot of talk lately in our state about the need to develop "green industries" and "green jobs." They are already here – in the fuel cell industry. Helping expand that industry should be a major goal of this legislative session. HB 1094 and HB 6650 are significant steps to achieving that goal.

Thank you.