

February 23, 2009

Co-Chair Edward Meyer
Co-Chair Richard Roy
Senator John McKinney
Representative Sean Williams

Members of Environment Committee:

I am submitting testimony in support of S.B. 31, AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK PETROLEUM CLEAN-UP ACCOUNT.

My name is Douglas Hendel. I am testifying on behalf of Hendel's Incorporated, a family-owned business of 60 years standing, based in Waterford, which owns approximately 40 gasoline stations and convenience stores in Connecticut. As I know the members of your Committee have a very busy schedule today, I will keep my comments brief.

I want to thank you for allowing me to testify today in favor of **SB 31**, a measure which would help ensure adequate funding of Connecticut's underground storage tank clean-up program. This Fund reimburses organizations, that abide by certain regulatory procedures before and after a spill, which own underground tanks in which gasoline and diesel is stored and then sold at the pump to the public, for some of the costs required to remediate gasoline and diesel spills. The Clean-Up Fund provides an incentive for such firms to clean-up spills in a thorough fashion by offering partial reimbursement for properly following what can be expensive remediation procedures that may otherwise be beyond the financial wherewithal of locally-owned companies such as ours.

SB 31 is critical to insuring that the citizens of our state are protected from contamination of ground water from fuel spills which are not properly remediated.

The financial resources of the State's Tank Clean-Up Fund are being threatened by budget cuts which, at first glance, might seem reasonable given the current budget crisis. However, inadequate funding of this program will actually **cost** the state **more** in the long run! Spills not properly remediated lead to larger, more expensive to resolve, problems impacting the environment of Connecticut and the health of its citizens. What is more, there is a significant possibility that locally-owned companies like Hendel's Inc. may not be able to remain in business without having some reimbursement assistance for fuel spill clean-ups. If firms like ours disappear resulting in less gas price competition at the pump, consumers may have to pay more for gasoline than they otherwise would, which would have a counter-productive impact upon Connecticut's economy.

Legislation which benefits the environment often hurts business. Legislation which benefits business often hurts the environment. However, SB 31 is a **win-win** situation for Connecticut. **A win for the environment, and a win for business.** Therefore, I urge this Committee to approve SB 31.

I ask that the Environment Committee support S.B. 31, AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK PETROLEUM CLEAN-UP ACCOUNT.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify today.

Respectfully,
Doug Hendel