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Energy and Technology Committee
March 3, 2009
Testimony of Martin Mador
In Support of
HB 6605 An Act Establishing a Department of Clean Energy

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the Legislative and Political Chair of the Connecticut Sierra Club, and am here today representing our 10,000 Connecticut members concerned about the health of our environment, our economic prosperity, and our quality of life. I possess a Master's of Environmental Management degree from Yale.

Energy issues have taken center stage over the past few years as one of the most critical areas affecting our economy, our well-being, our security, the health of our environment, and even the future geography of our planet.

Connecticut has delegated energy planning and programming to a number of offices. Yet there is little coordination between them. In the 1980s, we had an energy office with a staff of over 80. Today, we have a section within OPM with a staff of no more than six. We have no senior person at the commissioner level speaking on energy issues.

We need to competently address longstanding energy issues as diverse as fossil fuel use, green buildings, conservation and efficiency. We need to manage the transition to renewable or clean energy, including solar, wind, wave, geothermal, and bio fuels. Perhaps most importantly, we need to reduce the carbon emissions which are a direct result of energy use.

Sierra feels Connecticut cannot manage this issues without a central department with oversight of these issues. This bill would establish such as office. We are concerned it may not go far enough, but it is a worthy and necessary start, so we strongly endorse this bill, and consider it a priority bill for the 2009 session.

We are certainly in the throes of a fiscal crisis, when establishment of new resources may be problematic. However, we believe that creation of an Energy office or department is long overdue, and must be established now.