

Patricia J Wrice, Executive Director
Energy & Technology Committee Public Hearing
February 10, 2009

Good afternoon, my name is Patricia Wrice. executive director of Operation Fuel. I'm speaking in support of Proposed Bill No. 5987. I would like to thank Representative Sawyer and the Energy and Technology Committee for their support for Operation Fuel and the changes made to the Add-a-Dollar Program in Public Act 07-742.

Operation Fuel's mission is to provide emergency energy assistance to low-income households in crisis that have incomes from 151% to 200% of the federal poverty level and are not eligible for publicly funded energy assistance or have exhausted their benefits. Operation Fuel began out of a deep concern for families struggling to survive on low-incomes, and for whom financial and medical emergencies would result in their inability to pay for heat and utilities to keep their homes warm in the winter.

Operation Fuel began in 1977 as a program of the Christian Conference of Connecticut, a nonprofit statewide ecumenical religious agency.

In 1983, the Connecticut General Assembly passed Public Act 83-505 mandating gas and electric companies serving more than 75,000 customers to provide an opportunity for their customers to add one dollar to their monthly bill payment, the contributions to be forwarded to

Operation Fuel. The effective date of the add-a-dollar program was October 1, 1983

In August 1989 the Internal Revenue Service recognized Operation Fuel, Inc. as a (501)-(C)-(3) tax-exempt organization. During the 1989 legislative session, Public Act 83-505 was amended by deleting reference to the Christian Conference and designating Operation Fuel, Inc. as the recipient and administrator of add-a-dollar funds. All other provisions of the original legislation remained intact until 2007.

The new legislation Sec. 82 (a) (1) of (PA 07-242) passed in 2007 extends this requirement to municipal electric and gas utilities to (1) offer \$1,\$2,\$3, or other donation options and (2) allow customers who are billed or pay electronically to participate. It also requires Operation Fuel to provide fundraising inserts to fuel oil dealers who choose to participate in the program.

In January 2008, the DPUC held a technical meeting with representatives of the utility companies and Operation Fuel to discuss their plans for implementing the changes. There were additional meetings to identify and agree upon common program elements to meet the Departments goals.

These changes have had mixed results. Only one company, Northeast Utilities currently allows their customers who pay their bills on-line to donate to Operation. The other utilities do not provide that option.

The option of donating more than a dollar has not been implemented across all utilities. In fact donations through the Add-a-Dollar Program have actually decreased. I've enclosed with my remarks, the Add-a-Dollar history since its inception through this year for your review. (See Attached Report)

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

HISTORY OF ADD-A-DOLLAR AND CUSTOMER DONATIONS

<u>Year</u>	<u>CNG</u>	<u>CL&P*</u>	<u>Norwich DPUC</u>	<u>SCG</u>	<u>UI*</u>	<u>Yankee Gas</u>	<u>Bozrah</u>	<u>Jewett City DPU</u>	<u>City of Norwalk 3rd Dist</u>	<u>Total</u>
FY'83/84	24,492	115,941	1,240	11,201	52,885					205,759
FY'84/85	30,766	182,862	1,966	17,204	62,184					294,982
FY'85/86	32,242	230,728	2,834	21,602	80,686					368,092
FY'86/87	34,826	206,823	2,365	23,380	106,829					374,223
FY'87/88	36,412	323,165	2,788	25,370	116,932					504,667
FY'88/89	36,886	340,269	1,691	28,701	113,482					521,029
FY'89/90	39,620	201,008	1,400	27,098	98,281	15,554				382,961
FY'90/91	43,748	247,710	1,131	27,049	95,549	22,139				437,326
FY'91/92	48,562	289,633	973	27,030	91,229	24,970				482,397
FY'92/93	47,735	280,730	867	21,981	85,926	21,881	218			459,338
FY'93/94	45,245	271,419	1,412	19,387	62,206	22,406	388			422,463
FY'94/95	42,812	303,382	2,287	13,535	53,685	19,119	209			435,029
FY'95/96	46,895	300,294	1,078	14,995	51,628	17,689	29			432,608
FY'96/97	41,796	305,808	665	11,504	46,258	15,726				421,757
FY'97/98	40,196	316,956	636	11,512	42,950	14,924				427,174
FY'98/99	37,180	328,129	394	11,524	39,682	15,390				432,299
FY'99/00	37,726	329,345		10,929	36,785	13,898				428,683
FY'00/01	39,729	338,209		8,266	34,162	12,552				432,918
FY'01/02	39,219	338,057	1,543	4,192	35,772	17,027				435,809
FY'02/03	39,585	314,022	1,332	7,542	34,548	14,278				411,307
FY'03/04	28,122	297,899	1,784	10,218	33,894	21,960				393,877
FY'04/05	49,282	300,838	3,161	8,875	34,781	19,410				416,347
FY'05/06	44,046	295,413	3,949	10,063	34,079	22,583				410,133
FY'06/07	42,533	284,679	3,996	10,172	30,342	20,704				392,426
FY'07/08	41,361	276,716	10,254	9,545	34,758	21,846		111	223	394,814
FY'08/09**	<u>43,985</u>	<u>265,179</u>	<u>6,667</u>	<u>8,143</u>	<u>31,908</u>	<u>24,564</u>		<u>487</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>380,976</u> **
Totals	1,035,001	7,285,214	56,413	401,018	1,541,420	378,620	844	598	266	10,699,395

* From FY'83/84 through FY'88/89 the Add-A-Dollar figures include shareholder match for CL&P & UI.

** Add-a-Dollar contributions for the 1st 7 months of FY'08/09 are annualized here.