

Testimony of T. Michael Morrissey, Connecticut State Director to the National Propane Gas Association C/O Morrissey Consulting, 332 Strickland ST, Glastonbury, CT 06033 before the Energy and Technology Committee of the CT General Assembly on February 10, 2009.

Reference: Proposed Bill No. 6001: AN ACT PROHIBITING THE TERMINATION OF NONREGULATED UTILITIES DURING THE WINTER HEATING SEASON

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Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardella and other distinguished members of the committee; I am T. Michael Morrissey, Connecticut State Director to the National Propane Gas Association. Today, I represent local members of our national trade association. In that capacity, I am here to comment on Proposed Bill No. 6001: AN ACT PROHIBITING THE TERMINATION OF NONREGULATED UTILITIES DURING THE WINTER HEATING SEASON

I have worked in the propane industry for almost 30 years. Many of these years were spent as an executive officer administering the day to day activities of a propane operation. One of the most challenging parts of this job was to deal with our customers who during the winter time, refused to pay their bills or who could not afford to pay them. In the case of the latter, exceptional staff effort was offered in seeking and coordinating energy assistance from a variety of governmental agencies.

Our industry has always had the ability to terminate service to non-paying customers. Despite this essential freedom to do so, our industry through the years, has always acted responsibly. Service termination during the heating season is an undesirable and seldom used tool of the industry. The way in which this tool has been used over the years, has worked and needs to be preserved. In fact, if this tool was ever to be abused, the State of

Connecticut already maintains an important regulation to preserve the safety and welfare of both people and property. Specifically:

Sec. 29-331-1. 4-2.2.1 (f) In the event of an emergency such as the need for domestic heating during extreme cold weather conditions, leak or fire involving a cylinder, tank or regulator(s), an LP-Gas supplier is authorized to disconnect or evacuate the cylinder or tank at the direction of a public emergency response agency such as the fire department.

The above regulation as adopted by statute adequately protects consumers and property from the dangers of winter heating conditions. In fact, it is this same regulation that guides industry, to find remedies to collection related issues, especially during the winter time. Operators in our industry are very well aware of the above regulation and fully realize, once another company is servicing a non-paying customer, the ability to collect its debt, will become lost!

The “system” we have in place, is not “broken”. Consumers in our state, are protected in this very important area and because of this, we oppose Proposed Bill No. 6001. Any additional regulations offered by this proposed bill, would be more problematic to our industry and the customers it serves.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.