



February 26, 2009

Co-chair Thomas Colapietro  
Co-chair Jim Shapiro  
Senator Kevin Witkos  
Representative Penny Bacchiochi

General Law Committee:

I am submitting testimony in opposition to H.B. 6500, AN ACT CONCERNING HEATING OIL AND PROPANE GAS CHARGES.

The Independent Connecticut Petroleum Association (ICPA) represents over 550 petroleum marketers and their associated business in Connecticut. ICPA members employ over 13,000 people in our state and provide our fellow citizens with heating oil and moor fuels. Our heating oil dealers serve 682,000 consumers with heating oil, approximately half of which operate with contracts for their product deliveries.

ICPA believes that H.B. 6500 is unnecessary as another bill (H.B. 6470) contains similar language that the heating oil industry and Office of the Attorney General have been working on together for nearly 3 years.

The original statute we are proposing to amend in H.B. 6470 came about through a collaborative effort involving our association, the Department of Consumer Protection and the Office of the Attorney General. The heating oil dealer registration law of eight years ago, and its subsequent amendments, has succeeded in strengthening consumer protection and raising the level of corporate responsibility and behavior in our marketplace. Our law has become the model for laws recently passed in Vermont, Maine and other states in the northeast.

ICPA provides education programs to teach companies how to prepare valid contracts and further has issued a written Member Services Bulletin to guide companies on how to write valid contracts that are in compliance with the law. Contract issues are, more often than not, at the heart of the conflicts that arise between consumers, companies and government so it is in all of our interests to make the protocols for valid agreements as absolutely clear as possible.

The sections of H.B. 6470 that pertain to electronic contracts are a result of efforts on the part of the Office of the Attorney General and our industry, which has made considerable progress on protocols for what constitutes a valid contract under various state and federal electronic commerce statutes.

Thank you for your work on this legislation, and we thank the Office of the Attorney General for their time and effort to work with us in arriving at suitable protocols for what constitute valid agreements that protect both consumers and the companies that offer them.

Please oppose H.B. 6500, AN ACT CONCERNING HEATING OIL AND PROPANE GAS CHARGES as H.B. 6470 is a more comprehensive collaborative piece of legislation that will deliver results to the public.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian A. Herb".

Christian A. Herb  
Associate Director