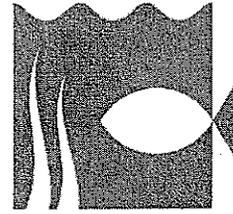


**Connecticut Fund
for the Environment**



Save the Sound®
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Connecticut Fund for the Environment

**Energy & Technology Committee
Public Hearing
March 16, 2010**

Submitted by: Charles J. Rothenberger, Staff Attorney

In Support of:

**H.B. No. 5508, AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE DIVISION OF ELECTRICITY POLICY
AND PROCUREMENT**

Connecticut Fund for the Environment ("CFE") is a non-profit environmental organization with over 6,500 members statewide. The mission of CFE is to protect and improve the land, air and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. For more than twenty-five years, CFE has used legal and scientific expertise to bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.

Representative Nardello, Senator Fonfara and Members of the Committee, Connecticut Fund for the Environment is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on HB 5508, An Act Concerning the Division of Electricity Policy and Procurement.

While CFE wholeheartedly supports efforts to streamline the state's energy planning, I would like to comment specifically on section 12 of the bill..

Section 12 of the bill would transfer responsibility for the state's adoption of appliance standards from the Office of Policy and Management to the newly created Division of Electricity Policy and Procurement. I note that another bill introduced this session, HB 5217, would revise this same section of the General Statutes by (1) providing a clear timeframe for the currently required ongoing identification and adoption of new and improved efficiency standards for consumer goods and (2) expanding the list of products subject to minimum energy efficiency standards to include consumer electronic products such as compact audio products, DVD players and televisions. I would urge the Committee to revise section 12 of HB 5508 to incorporate the language included in HB 5217.

Despite a clear legislative mandate to promote energy conservation in the state by adopting efficiency standards for new products on an ongoing basis, OPM has thus far only acted in response to the express identification of new standards by the General Assembly. The language in HB 5217 clarifies and reinforces existing law.

As residential electricity usage, costs and greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, it is increasingly important that we take advantage of every opportunity to use energy more wisely. Appliance standards are an important part of the energy efficiency solution. While Connecticut has been recognized as a national leader in promoting energy conservation, in order to meet the energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction goals that it has set for itself, the state must continue to identify and adopt efficiency measures in a timely and efficient manner.

The electronics standards would establish maximum power usage levels for compact audio products, DVD players and recorders and televisions when they are in “stand-by passive mode.” This is the state when an appliance is nominally turned off, but is still drawing power so that it can be turned on remotely (commonly referred to as “phantom” or “vampire” power). The standards also establish maximum power usage levels for televisions when they are “on mode”, or actively in operation.

Improving appliance efficiency has great potential for cutting electricity demand, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Nationwide, homes spend about a third of their energy use on appliances, computers, and electronics. Televisions alone now account for about 10 percent of household electricity use. Entertainment devices are among the biggest culprits when it comes to standby power consumption: 40 percent of all electricity used to power consumer electronics is used when the products have been turned off and are in standby mode. According to the International Energy Agency, roughly \$4 billion annually across the United States is spent on electricity lost to “phantom power.”

Efficiency standards for the seventeen products Connecticut already regulates are cutting the state's carbon emissions by 158,000 metric tons. Adopting these efficiency standards for home electronics will reduce energy consumption in Connecticut by more than 214 gigawatts by 2020 (enough to power more than 20,000 homes), reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an additional

110,000 metric tons (equivalent to removing more than 23,000 vehicles from the road), and reduce other air pollutants by over 650 tons.

And reducing energy use also cuts bills for consumers. These standards will result in total annual savings to Connecticut residents of more than \$33 million in 2020. By 2030, those annual savings will have grown to more than \$52 million. In a state with the second highest electricity rates in the nation, every opportunity to improve energy efficiency and reduce overall energy demand should be taken.

Efficiency standards for consumer audio and video products have already been adopted, in whole or in part, by California, New York and Oregon, and they are pending in Massachusetts. Five states (Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Washington and Wisconsin) currently have legislation pending to follow California's lead in adopting television efficiency standards. Recognizing the huge cost-effective energy saving potential, the television standards in California were supported by the state's electric utilities as well as *Vizio*, the leading seller of flat-panel televisions in North America and several manufacturers of television components (their comments are attached).

In conclusion, for the sake of consistency and to avoid possible confusion, I would urge the Committee to revise section 12 of HB 5508 to incorporate the language included in HB 5217.