

**TRUMBULL FIRE
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**Testimony for Bill 461:
An Act Concerning the Siting Council Proceedings and Decisions.**

Good afternoon, my name is Megan Murphy; I am the Fire Marshal for the Town of Trumbull. Thank you, Co-Chairmen Fonfara and Nardello along with the members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the residents of Trumbull. I know that First Selectman Herbst and the residents of Trumbull appreciate your leadership in addressing our energy challenges. In particular we are proud to support Bill 461, an act concerning the Siting Council proceedings and decisions.

While the energy challenges you face appear daunting, before you sits legislation to assist the Siting Council in deciding to grant or deny an application. The time has come for action to be taken to protect the residents of the State of Connecticut. If you take away one thing from my comments today, let it be this: the residents of our communities depend on us to ensure that codes, standards and laws are passed and enforced to ensure their safety. Adoption of these proposed changes will empower the Siting Council to address public safety and add another level of protection to our residents.

Webster's Dictionary defines the word impact as "to have a direct affect on something." This very simple word holds a very significant meaning. By the adoption of Bill 461 the word impact is added to the text. The Siting Council will now be able to look at the IMPACT an application may have on the natural environment, residential neighborhoods, historic areas and recreational facilities. Most importantly, the Siting Council must now consider the IMPACT on the public's health and safety.

Current and future proposals brought before this council that are intended to offer potential energy efficiencies can sometimes be in direct competition with the safety of the public. You have before you the opportunity to do more to protect our residents. A horrifying example of the potential conflict these situations create occurred on Sunday February 7, 2010 at approximately 11:00 am. On that day, a devastating explosion occurred in Middletown, CT at the Kleen Energy Plant. This explosion claimed six lives, injuring dozens more and was felt for miles around. Homes thousands of feet away suffered extensive damage from the blast. The

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concussion created by the explosion was so severe that many people believed they were experiencing an earthquake. After the explosion, people began to see the dreadful images being broadcast nationwide on their televisions and world wide via the internet. The images from that fateful Sunday morning depicted the massive damage created by the explosion. Now imagine that Sunday morning explosion occurring just a few hundred feet away from your home while you sit in the kitchen and drink your morning cup of coffee. Applications have come and will continue to come before the Siting Council that have and will propose power plants to be built and operated directly in the middle of residential neighborhoods. Some of these proposals position these power plants less than a mile from schools and the sports fields that are occupied daily by our children. While many of the proposed power plants are on a smaller scale than the Kleen Energy Plant in Middletown, they are also positioned much closer to residential neighborhoods and business communities. One of the proposed changes is the addition of specific language that allows the Siting Council to consider public safety issues as a primary factor when deciding to approve or deny an application. As such, it has become part of the duties of the Siting Council to consider the public and the ultimate impact that the applications they approve will have on the public's safety.

Bill 461 also provides the Siting Council the ability to add another level of safety when reviewing these proposals. The Siting Council will now have the ability to consider the manufacturer's recommendations for safety standards regarding any equipment, machinery or technology. With much of this technology still in its relative infancy, codes and standards have not yet been written to address the growing concerns and potential dangers. The Siting council, along with local authorities are going to have to depend on the manufacturers to have the most stringent safety standards and practices. The proposed language will hopefully ensure that the applicant does meet and follow safety guidelines.

I strongly believe that empowering the Siting council through legislative language can be the best tool in the toolbox for tackling challenging proceedings and difficult decisions. We stand ready to be partners in creating a safer, more energy efficient future by supporting bill 461.