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Testimony before the Joint Committee on Energy and Technology
on S.B. 350
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Chairman Fonfara and Chairwoman Nardello and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is John Gladysz, and I am the chief engineer and managing director for Orbitech Satellite Services LLC. We sell and install satellite TV equipment throughout the state of Connecticut. Our offices are located in Plainville, Connecticut and we employ eight people in the state.

I am here today to urge you to oppose S.B. 350—a bill that would penalize satellite companies with a 20% increase to their gross earnings tax if they do not carry the Connecticut Television Network.

As I understand it, this tax is illegal, however, I will leave the legal arguments to the lawyers. What I can tell you is that passing an illegal tax will hurt satellite TV customers and it will hurt companies like mine that sell and install satellite TV service.

If this bill becomes law, satellite TV subscribers will be forced to pay an illegal penalty tax on their television. Connecticut families have suffered enough during this recession. All you have to do is pick up a newspaper to see the evidence. Nearly one in ten Connecticut residents is unemployed. Unemployment rates in some cities exceed 10%. Tens of thousands of Connecticut families have lost their homes. The citizens of this state cannot take another tax.

And I don't think there is any dispute that TV is more than a luxury. For many of us, TV is our primary source of information about current events, weather, and state and local politics. In these hard economic times, it is also our entertainment of last resort. My employees aren't going to movies, or concerts, or out for dinner. For most of them, their only form of entertainment is the TV. Adding an additional tax on satellite TV service might not seem like much, but I am willing to bet it will put this last form of entertainment out of reach for many Connecticut families.

This is not the time to burden our residents, and companies, like mine, that rely on their business, with additional taxes on services they can not afford to lose.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.