



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITY CONTROL

THE ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

House Bill 5958: AAC ENERGY UPGRADES, WEATHERIZATION AND FUEL ASSISTANCE FOR RESIDENTIAL HOMES AND MUNICIPAL AND STATE BUILDINGS

March 17, 2011

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITY CONTROL

The Department of Public Utility Control (Department or DPUC) thanks the Committee for this opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 5958. House Bill No. 5958 would transfer the administration of the Department of Social Services' (DSS) weatherization assistance and fuel assistance program for the elderly, disabled and hardship clients to the DPUC's jurisdiction. This bill also requires that the Department conduct a study of the progress of the state-appropriated weatherization assistance program and report its findings to the General Assembly by February 2012.

First, the Department notes that the proposed bill as stated would represent a significant shift in responsibility from the DSS to the DPUC. Currently, the DPUC does have a consumer unit consisting of 14 consumer representatives to assist ratepayers with their bill inquiries, complaints and issues related to payment plans and terminations. In the past year, this unit logged over 52,424 consumer calls and responded to over 1,741 letters and emails. The addition of the DSS fuel assistance and weatherization programs would necessitate additional personnel in order for it to undertake the charge presented by this proposed bill.

Secondly, the DPUC agrees that there should be a broader evaluation of all state energy assistance programs as to how to evaluate these programs so the best resources and impact is delivered to the most vulnerable households. The Department would encourage that the issue presented here be addressed in one coherent manner as is contemplated in Senate Bill 1. The Department believes that the discussions developing in response to Senate Bill 1 is the appropriate forum to pursue any proposed efficiencies and create the most effective resources for Connecticut ratepayers.

The Department thanks the Committee for this opportunity to comment and would be happy to work with policy makers on this issue.