



Testimony of Greater Bridgeport Community Enterprises, Inc. (The Green Team)
In Support of HB 6544, *An Act Concerning Energy Efficiency*

Before the Energy and Technology Committee
March 8, 2011

Submitted by Adrienne Farrar Houël

Dear Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, and members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

I submit this testimony in support of House Bill 6544, An Act Concerning Energy Efficiency, on behalf of the Greater Bridgeport Community Enterprises, Inc. (GBCE/The Green Team). GBCE/ The Green Team is a non-profit community development corporation specializing in the training and employment of low to moderate income area residents in residential and commercial energy conservation. We employ graduating students in our contracting department where they gain experience in Weatherization, insulation and window-replacement jobs. We support this job-creating bill and hope to participate in all phases of developing the private energy conservation market from outreach, through financing and contractor or worker training.

Connecticut, as a cool-weather state with an older building stock, has a great deal to gain from energy efficient building practices. Thus far, however, the cost and lack of a secure return on investment have prevented many building owners from improving their buildings' efficiency, and that low demand has kept our efficiency sector from meeting its growth potential. This bill will help solve that. Sections 1 – 3 require the creation of an efficiency rating and labeling system for residential and commercial buildings, the assessment of buildings, and the disclosure of these ratings to potential buyers and renters. The benefits of this approach include:

- Buyers and renters can make well-informed decisions, choosing buildings with lower energy costs and higher resale value, and realtors can better serve their clients' interests
- Property owners are assured of a good return on investment, because their efficient buildings will likely command a high market price
- Commercial building owners can track the efficiency of their buildings over time, enabling them to continuously improve, and utilities can more effectively target programs to these large-scale customers
- Energy auditors will see their business opportunities expand and gain the security of knowing their services will be in demand long-term
- Contractor jobs will be created as demand for retrofit services increases, spurred by building owners who recognize efficiency as a force that increases their building's market value

Similar programs are working in Oregon and Washington State, and are being considered or implemented in other places like California, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

A Community Development Corporation

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Section 8 establishes a low-interest loan fund that will help homeowners and business owners finance improvement projects. Such a program could adjust the rate of repayment to closely follow the cost savings from the improvement, so the owner's monthly payments don't go up. In addition, it could tie the loan repayment to the property, not to the current owner. If the current owner sells the property before the loan is repaid, the new owner—who is now reaping the benefits of a more efficient building—takes on the burden of the loan. This dramatically lowers the risk to current building owners, because they know they won't be stuck with the balance of a loan if they sell early.

This bill will create business opportunities and secure jobs in the growing energy efficiency field, help meet the state's carbon reduction obligations, and help Connecticut citizens in all income strata save money. I urge you to support HB 6544, AAC Energy Efficiency.

Thank you for your consideration of our rationale for supporting this much needed bill.

Sincerely,



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