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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps, Program Director
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee

March 17, 2011

Written testimony supporting **SB 1168**, An Act Concerning An Electric Vehicle
Infrastructure

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, Senator Witkos, Representative Hoydick, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony supporting SB 1168. Environment Connecticut is a member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization. This legislation can help our state begin to break its dependence on oil by increasing the transition towards electrification of our transportation infrastructure.

Plug-in electric vehicles will play a huge role in breaking our dependence on oil, cutting transportation costs for our families and businesses, and reducing pollution, in coming years. As our transportation economy transitions off of oil onto alternative fuels such as electric vehicles, policy makers need to make certain that public policy at the state and federal level keeps pace with, and encourages that transition. SB 1168 can further this goal.

Section 1 of the bill takes steps towards ensuring that residential and commercial buildings are equipped to meet the needs of homeowners and businesses for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This is a good step that we support.

Section 3 of the bill deletes an existing previous sales tax exemption for vehicles getting EPA MPG ratings of 40 miles per gallon or greater and replaces it with an exemption for hydrogen fuel cell or electric vehicles with no reference to MPG ratings.

EPA has modified its MPG ratings to include a "miles per gallon of gasoline equivalent" (MPGe) rating for alternative fuel vehicles such as plug-in electrics. For hydrogen fuel cell vehicles such as the Honda FCX Clarity, EPA uses miles-per-kg. (One kg of hydrogen being "roughly" equivalent to one gallon of gasoline according to fuelconomy.gov.) In order to most effectively accomplish the goal of this section, and ensure the sales tax exemption is limited to truly high-efficiency vehicles, we respectfully offer the following alternative language defining the vehicles to qualify for the exemption (at line 34.):

(110) On and after January 1, 2008, and prior to July 1, [2010] 2013, the sale of any passenger motor vehicle, as defined in section 14-1, that has a United States Environmental Protection Agency estimated combined city [or] and highway [gasoline] mileage rating of at least [forty miles per gallon.] 50 miles per gallon, 50 miles per gallon of gasoline equivalent, or 50 miles per kilogram of hydrogen.”

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of SB 1168. For additional information about plug-in vehicle policies, a 2010 report titled, “Plug-In Cars: Powering America Toward A Cleaner Future” is available at www.environmentconnecticut.org/reports.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps
Program Director
Environment Connecticut