



State of Connecticut
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Transportation Committee Public Hearing 2-14-11

Proposed H.B. No. 6127 An Act Promoting the Use of Fuel Cells in Vehicles.

Dear Chairman Guerrera, Chairman Maynard, Ranking Members Boucher and Scribner and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee,

I testify today in support of HB 6127 An Act Promoting the Use of Fuel Cells in Vehicles. This legislation is very simple in concept. If adopted, this legislation would amend the general statutes to require that at least one per cent of the state fleet of light duty passenger vehicles and one per cent of the transit bus fleet use fuel cells by 2015 and at least ten per cent of such fleets use fuel cells by 2025; and to exempt all fuel cell vehicle purchases from the state sales tax.

The purpose of these changes is to move the State of Connecticut to make a commitment to invest in fuel cell technology in accordance with recommendations made by a report that was released by the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology and the Department of Transportation. CCAT and CTDOT recommend the State of Connecticut move in the direction of transitioning our state fleet of vehicles to fuel cell powered vehicles for many reasons, but the most important impetus for this bill is to protect and create good paying high-tech jobs in our Connecticut.

Connecticut has eight fuel cell companies that employ thousands of people in our state, most notably United Technologies Corporation. UTC employs many people in my district in Manchester and across the state. Primarily, because of our entrepreneurial spirit, as well as our well-educated, scientific work-force and our geographic proximity to Boston and New York, Connecticut has emerged as a world leader in fuel cell technology. We are justly proud of this and this sense of pride and accomplishment will only increase, since this emerging industry shows great promise for transforming our environment, reducing our carbon footprint and creating quality jobs for the future.

With unemployment at 9 percent and many constituents concerned about the business climate in our state, the questions I am asked most frequently by my constituents are: what are you doing to create jobs? what are you doing to keep companies in Connecticut? what are you doing to make sure Connecticut's economy can flourish and compete with other states?

My answer is that Connecticut has to take advantage of natural advantages and maximize its economic strengths. In the Transportation Committee, I imagine there is often a discussion about how to maximize our State's strategic location between the two major economic engines of Boston and New York -- the New Haven to Springfield rail-line falls into that category. My own State Senator, Steve Cassano, has spoken eloquently about making sure we put Connecticut's "ports in the right position to take advantage of our Panama Canal project." The fuel cell industry is Connecticut's "diamond in the rough". We are a world leader. We have the companies with the technology. We have the scientific work-force, but we don't have the state government incentives and commitments to protect, expand and capitalize on our natural strength.

6127 demonstrates to these companies and their Connecticut workers, that we will support their traditional work ethic, ground-breaking research and development efforts and improvements to our environment; as well as capitalize on the competitive advantage we have in an emerging industry.

I believe the immediate upfront costs to this legislation are negligible, and the benefits of putting the framework in place for state support of more efficient high tech vehicles will create and protect jobs and add to our state's revenue base over time.

I thank you for your indulgence and consideration of this legislation and am open to any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rep. Geoff Luxenberg
12th House District
Manchester, CT

Connecticut Association of Tax Collectors

Testimony Opposing Proposed Bill 5953 AAC Delinquent Municipal Property Taxes and the Registration of Motor Vehicles.

Lisa Biagiarelli, CCMC, Esq
Tax Collector, City of Norwalk

This proposal, currently before the Transportation Committee, would change state law to permit a motor vehicle owner to register a vehicle if municipal property taxes have been paid *for that vehicle*, regardless of other delinquent taxes still due on other motor vehicles owned by the same person.

This proposal would cost towns and cities tax and interest revenue by decreasing tax collections, and serve to increase the burden placed on the 98% of the population that pays property taxes on time. The only constituents this proposal would benefit are delinquent taxpayers who own multiple vehicles and who don't want to pay their taxes.

If a taxpayer owns and pays taxes on multiple vehicles, present law requires the person to be current on all their vehicle taxes before receiving 'clearance' to register any of those vehicles with the Department of Motor Vehicles. This registration 'stop' is acknowledged as the primary method of tax collection enforcement for motor vehicle property taxes in Connecticut. Towns and cities pay the DMV an annual fee to administer this 'stop' and municipal tax collectors diligently supply the DMV with updated lists of their delinquent accounts AND monthly 'take off' lists of those taxpayers who have met their obligations. A taxpayer can also receive a paper 'clearance' or a stamp on the back of their registration renewal to immediately show DMV that the tax obligation has been met. Connecticut tax collectors have a good working relationship with the DMV, and are committed to improving communication and the administration of this system to ensure fairness and equity to all Connecticut property taxpayers and efficiency in tax collections.

Allowing a taxpayer to ignore delinquent taxes on other vehicles while paying only on the vehicle he wishes to register will cost towns and cities tax and interest revenue. The taxpayer is still driving all of the vehicles on town and city streets. The taxes due on the other vehicles continue to accrue interest charges and possibly other collection costs.

Under this proposal, a chronically delinquent taxpayer could change vehicles every two years and never pay another cent in motor vehicle taxes again, because he could register a

new vehicle every two years and freely ignore the tax obligations on the vehicles registered and taxed in prior years. It could be argued that any taxpayer who can afford to own and operate more than one vehicle should be prepared to meet his tax obligations on all of those vehicles when he wants to register any of them.

It is bad public policy to encourage tax delinquency and take revenue away from cities and towns. It is bad public policy to allow a delinquent tax scofflaw to shirk his responsibility to pay taxes lawfully assessed and levied. It is even worse public policy to simultaneously shift the burden of making up the difference in tax revenue onto the back of the on time taxpayer who has already met his obligations and paid his fair share.

We respectfully urge this Committee and the General Assembly to reject this and any similar proposal that makes it easier to avoid paying lawfully assessed taxes, rather than strengthening the means to collect them.

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