



Sheet Metal Workers' International Association Local 40
100 Old Forge Road, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Testimony in support of HB 5340 An Act Establishing An Energy-Related Jobs Task Force

Good Morning Co-Chairs Senator LeBeau and Representative Berger, and members of the Commerce committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the important concept of Green Jobs for Connecticut.

For folks not familiar with our Local, Local 40 represents over 500 members employed by over 45 companies in the sheet metal industry of Connecticut. Sheet metal contractors and the skilled union sheet metal craftsmen they employ design, fabricate, install and test highly complex air distribution systems to provide controlled temperature and air quality, purified air elimination of pollution, reduce operating costs, conserve energy and protect against fire damage. Our highly trained workforce follows rigid standards and specifications to ensure consistent quality and smooth operation for every building facility.

Sheet metal work tends to be steadier than some other construction crafts, because maintenance and replacement work in existing buildings can compensate for slack in new construction. Still, the Wall-Street-generated economic downturn has hurt our membership and we have many skilled men and women qualified to work and unable to find it. Furthermore, there are many folks here in Connecticut willing to go through our training programs and learn the trade, but who cannot be picked up to begin an apprenticeship because there just isn't the demand. We like to call our apprenticeships "the other 4 year degree" but with one huge distinction from standard college education, in the unionized trades apprenticeship education and training comes at no cost to the apprentice and no cost to the state. These jobs have decent, middle-class pay and benefits, and are careered jobs that a family can rely on, when the work is steady. Rebuilding the construction trade workforce is essential to our economic recovery in this state.

Fortunately, there is a great opportunity to create jobs by addressing energy efficiency concerns, as this committee has recognized. Sheet Metal Workers Local 40 supports the establishment of a task force to create green jobs because the prospects are plenty: our Connecticut housing stock and commercial buildings is in need of upgrades, the technology is available, the workforce is plenty, and our environment needs these changes.

It is good that the task force provides a role for labor to address these issues, since ensuring that the work is done locally and at high standards requires input from those who know the trade and the industry. I would like to suggest that the task force focus its mission to be sure that we identify real and immediate opportunities to reduce barriers to the creation of more green jobs. Focusing on energy efficiency of old homes and commercial buildings will allow us to build upon successful models in other states and address a need that is valuable to thousands of homeowners and building owners.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Jeremy Zeedyk

Marketing Representative at Sheet Metal Workers Local 40