

**Testimony of Ben Martin
of 350 Connecticut and the Wallingford Energy Conservation Commission
Before the Energy & Technology Committee**

In Support of
**HOUSE BILL 5385, AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY RETROFITS
FOR CERTAIN BUILDINGS AND THE DISCLOSURE OF THE
ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF CERTAIN BUILDINGS**

Submitted by
Ben Martin
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Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, and members of the Committee,

I moved to Connecticut in 1997 to start my first job out of college. After living in an apartment for four years my future wife and I decided to look for a house. Our apartment was great but we wanted to do some things that weren't possible in an apartment. We wanted to adopt a dog, plant a garden, sit on a porch and maybe spend some time in the yard. Basically we wanted the freedom to live the way we chose without having to check with the landlord.

So we found a great house, close to the center of Wallingford, with lots of space, a small yard and a lot of character. We did some improvements to make the place our own and moved in our furniture. It very quickly started to feel like home. When I got the first Yankee Gas bill I realized that freedom is very expensive. The electric bill was less shocking but still an added cost. I had made sure we could afford the mortgage and other expenses but paying the energy bills for the home that we love caused us to have to cut back in other ways.

I support House Bill 5385, AAC Energy Retrofits for Certain Buildings and the Disclosure of the Energy Efficiency of Certain Buildings. which directs the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to establish a program for providing homebuyers and apartment tenants with information about the energy efficiency performance of homes they are considering. If there had been an energy audit done for the property we would have been better prepared to calculate the energy cost of our new home. This bill would require these audits so that homebuyers, as well as renters, could be sure they know the full costs of the home when they move in.

Our home is more than a century old. We have made many energy efficiency improvements in the ten years we have lived there:

- Replaced the old natural gas boiler with a smaller 85% efficient boiler
- Replaced the asphalt roof with a metal roof to reflect heat in the summer and store it in the winter
- Add ceiling fans to many rooms to circulate air.
- Insulated the hot water pipes
- Replaced older light bulbs with the latest most efficient bulbs
- Had a energy audit done by professionals and had them seal air leaks that were causing heat loss.

These measures have not only been rewarded with lower energy bill but have added to the value of the house.

The measures have also satisfied my drive to be a better steward of our natural resources. We live in a world of limited resources and I believe it is up to everyone to use those resources as wisely as possible. The guidelines is this bill would provide the tools to renters, homebuyers, home sellers, large businesses and all types of people to reduce their resource use in smart ways that not only save them money but preserve the

wonderful natural world that we enjoy in CT. This bill would increase the demand for energy audit and retrofit services and spur new smart businesses locally so that the economy and people's lives can be improved. Energy savings will encourage residents to spend their money locally instead of paying for fuel imported for other parts of the country, or the world. Using less fossil fuels also means less bad air quality days and improved health of CT residents.

Similar programs have proven effective in states such as California, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, and New Mexico and in cities like New York and Washington, D.C. Mandating energy audits spurs homes on the market to compete to be the most efficient because energy efficient home are more desirable to consumers in a weak housing market. When they operating cost of the home are the lower the property is likely to sell sooner than a energy intensive home. It also protects the buyer from over estimating their ability to afford the home and overextending themselves.

I am confident that had this law been in place when I bought my home, it would have been far more efficient than it was initially. And I know that the expense of making the energy improvements we have will not only pay off in lower monthly bills and cleaner air but in higher property value in the years to come. I hope that you will support HB 5385 for the cost savings it offers Connecticut residents, the benefits to our air quality, and the additional economic activity and jobs it will generate in the efficiency and energy services sector. I also hope you will support this bill so future home buyers have the ability to enjoy their newfound freedom without worrying about how they will pay their energy bills.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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