



**Testimony of John Murphy on behalf of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group  
in favor of Raised Bill 5544 AAC STORM PREPARATION  
AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello and members of the committee. My name is John Murphy and I'm speaking on behalf of the over 20,000 member families of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group in favor of H.B. No. 5544, AN ACT CONCERNING STORM PREPARATION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE.

We are in favor of this bill rather than S.B. 23 because there are much more specific measures assuring accountability and more long range planning for undergrounding utilities. However, there are some specifics in S.B. 23 that should be incorporated into H.B. 5544.

Both bills require PURA to establish performance standards and establish fines for up to \$25 million for utilities that fail to meet the standards. We are strongly in favor H.B. 5544's requirement of PURA to reduce executives' ratepayer funded compensation for violation of standards. We are in favor of incorporating S.B. 23's provision of staff safety into the performance standards.

Both bills establish a micro-grid grant and loan program to distribute local renewable energy, but this is where the similarities end.

H.B. 5544 requires electric and telephone utilities to conduct review and report yearly on their infrastructure and emergency response. It requires wireless companies to provide back-up generation at cell phone towers, a problem that was exposed during Tropical Storm Irene and the October snowstorm. Cell phone communication is critical when wires are down.

This bill also does a lot to encourage the undergrounding of utilities through creating special taxing districts, providing customers with information on undergrounding new service, getting state agencies to incorporate undergrounding into their planning processes and getting PURA to open a docket on undergrounding.

You have incorporated many of the recommendations of the Connecticut Storm Response Panel as well as your own good ideas. Please pass H.B. 5544 with the inclusion of staff safety standards. Thank you.

**CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP**

*Putting People First*