The Energy and Technology Committee
Public Hearing, March 20, 2012

Office of Consumer Counsel

Elin Swanson Katz, Consumer Counsel

Testimony of Elin Swanson Katz

Governor's Bill 23, *An Act Enhancing Emergency Preparedness and Response*

With respect to Section 1 of this proposed bill, the Office of Consumer Counsel ("OCC") fully supports the participation of Connecticut's public service companies in the preparation of a comprehensive plan and program for civil preparedness, and in planning, training and exercises related to such plan. The power outages from the two major storms last year highlighted the need for public service companies to work closely with state and municipal officials during civil emergencies. OCC has some questions regarding the implications of this bill for jurisdiction over utility infrastructure, operations and management, and ratemaking, which traditionally has been the purview of what is now known as the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority ("PURA"). Given that PURA has the requisite experience and expertise regarding utility operations, management and ratemaking, OCC suggests that that portion of the comprehensive plan and program for civil preparedness related to public service companies be prepared jointly by the Commissioner of DEMHS and PURA, and that any aspect of the plan that would increase utility rates be subject to PURA rate review.

OCC supports the remaining sections of Governor's Bill No. 23, insofar as they should increase the reliability of utility service and are not unduly burdensome on ratepayers.