



30 Arbor St. Suite 210
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 523-1699

<http://connecticutworkingfamilies.org/>

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To the Co-Chairs and members of the Energy & Technology Committee

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 450, AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY CONSERVATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY and HB 5543 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION AND EXPANSION OF MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Submitted by Kennard Ray, Legislative Director

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 450, AAC Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy. Working Families is pleased to support this bill.

I'd like to focus my support first on Section 21 of the bill, which removes the cap on energy program assistance for oil customers that was put in place by last year's major energy bill, P.A. 11-80. It specifies that all oil, gas, and electric heat customers will be able to access the services of the Home Energy Solutions program at the same costs regardless of heating source, for as long as that program is supported by a surcharge on utility bills. Today, 48 percent of Connecticut homes use fuel oil. By removing the cap on energy assistance for nearly half of the state's energy consumers, these oil customers will be open to take advantage of programs that can save them hundreds of dollars a year while at the same time maintaining and growing jobs in the energy efficiency and home retro-fitting industry as well as reducing greenhouse emissions produced by the burning of oil – a fossil fuel. This will also be an important program to have in place as Connecticut develops programs to create a higher volume of home retrofits.

Connecticut currently has the programming in place to help residents reduce their energy use, and in effect grow jobs. Programs such as the Home Energy Solutions program which provides low-cost home energy audits and basic efficiency improvements, along with rebate and financing programs to help make thorough efficiency upgrades more affordable and available to more families. In the still weak job environment, SB450 effectively gives the state an opportunity to open up and grow an existing job market, while addressing the consumer need and frustration associated with high-energy cost. This can all be done while reducing greenhouse gas emissions which home energy currently contributes around 20 percent of all emissions in Connecticut today. Connecticut is need of a strong bill like SB450 that pushes us forward on so many fronts, opening the door for a Green Jobs stream that will create the jobs SB450 specifies, but will also go beyond and set the table to generate consumer demand for more energy efficiency programs and subsequent jobs for the future.



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The infrastructure to move this forward currently exists. The state's natural gas and electricity utilities currently fund these programs through a surcharge on consumer's monthly bills, but not on oil bills. Due to this, oil customers have limited access to the programs, even though they contribute to the funds via their electric bills. This is unfair to these consumers who not only feel the crunch associated with high oil payments, but are then subjected to payment into a fund that they are not able to take full advantage of.

I would also like to express our support for 5543, expanding the ability for municipalities to adopt public power systems. Municipalization of power needs to be an option for every town in this state, as our customers pay among the highest energy rates in the country. Our families and businesses deserve the opportunity to make a local switch to public power, which saves on executive salaries and promotes competition for lower rates within the industry.

Thank You,

Kennard Ray