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Testimony on HB4453, Energy and Technology Committee
March 20, 2012
By CT Public Power Task Force -

Good afternoon. My name is *Beth Angel*

I am here today representing the Ct Public Power Task Force. We are a group of CT residents from 14 different towns which suffered from the long shutdowns in our electricity last year. The unexcusable length of these outages was highlighted by the quick response and short time without power in the towns served by our local electrical co-op.

Wallingford, in particular, in the heart of the critical area, up and running after 2-3 days, served as a lifeline to all the surrounding towns, providing them with food and water. The success in Wallingford was due to better upkeep of their distribution system and full coordination among town officials. Electrical distribution there is fully integrated with the other town agencies.

Most other towns in central CT, as everyone in them knows, suffered from a complete dislocation of communication with CL&P. The CL&P crews performed heroic work, but were forced to work under full management disarray.

Thousands of informed citizens, all over CT, are now taking a hard look at municipalization, or Public Power as we call it. About 15% of our nation's power is distributed by local governments, 6% in CT. People served by Public Power are used to better service at lower rates, as much as 40% lower. This is very attractive in a state with the highest rates in the continental US.

One of the reasons why more towns in CT don't move to Public Power is obstructive state statutes. HB⁴⁴⁵³~~4453~~, submitted by the Energy Committee goes a long ways toward correcting this problem. This bill clearly enables towns to use eminent domain to takeover the poles and wires of their town and adjacent towns, paying fair market value. Without this clarifying wording the right of towns to do this is unclear.

Elected leaders in several CT towns are keenly interested in Public Power. These towns include New Britain, Hartford, Glastonbury, Middletown, Mansfield, Andover, and West Hartford.

I would like to add that additional changes in State Statutes would make HB4453 even more useful. It would be important to remove some obstructive language to enable electrical co-ops, multi-town alliances, to use eminent domain.