



Testimony of AARP on SB 450
An Act Concerning *Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy*

Energy and Technology Committee
March 20, 2012

AARP is an organization that helps people 50+ live their best life. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan social mission organization with nearly 600,000 Connecticut members. AARP has major concerns with the impact that many sections of SB 450 would have on ratepayers.

SB 450 is a very large bill that has 28 sections, mostly covering many areas of conservation and renewable energy. Additionally there are sections that deal with storm response.

AARP policy more closely supports the approaches to the storm response that are found in House Bill 5544, An Act Concerning Storm Preparation and Emergency Response. We encourage the committee to read our testimony that was submitted on that legislation.

Several provisions of the bill would add to the Systems benefit Charge or the Gas Energy Efficiency Recovery Charges. Every time a new energy conservation program is paid for by increases in those charges ratepayers bills also increase. Connecticut ratepayers have suffered for many years paying the highest electric rates in the Continental United States. This has been due mainly to deregulation and the high cost of Natural Gas in recent years. Finally Connecticut Ratepayers are seeing relief as Natural Gas costs have dropped and reforms from Public Act 11-80 have been implemented.

Now is not the time to put additional burdens on ratepayers, particularly those who are the low and moderate income, who have the least ability to pay the charges and least ability to take advantage of the efficiency programs and alternative fuel vehicles. In order to fully understand what the total impact of all the proposals would be on individual ratepayers, AARP looks forward to seeing the fiscal note on the bill.

At the time in which the total ratepayer impact of the various proposals in SB450 is known, we will make suggestions for what programs make sense for Connecticut's energy future, while also suggesting ways to mitigate the impact that any new changes and fees would have on ratepayers. AARP looks forward to working with DEEP and the Energy and Technology Committee to ensure that ratepayers are protected.