



# CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Testimony of Lori Pelletier  
Secretary-Treasurer Connecticut AFL-CIO  
Before the Planning and Development Committee  
Friday, March 9, 2012

Senator Cassano and Representative Gentile and members The Committee my name is Lori Pelletier and I am the elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO and I am here to offer comments on behalf of the 900 affiliated local unions who represent over 200,000 working men and women from all 169 cities and towns.

## H.B. No. 5407 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC UTILITIES

We support this proposed legislation. The last fourteen months of weather and the subsequent response by utility companies have been a real eye opener to local elected officials as well as those of you here at the General Assembly. However, my affiliates who work for these utility companies have been sounding the alarm for years regarding the utilities ability to respond in a timely manner.

Back in 2007 they testified about staffing levels and maintenance schedules on our utility systems and few listened. Since 2001 the employment levels have diminished nearly 20% while customer numbers have increased significantly. Maintenance budgets have been cut year after year, including from 2010 to 2011 when one utility cut their maintenance budget line item by 30%.

We appreciate the focus of this committee's legislation on improved communication and response, but this cannot be done in a vacuum and ignore the draconian cuts that the workforce has suffered while profits have sky rocketed. Staffing levels are as important to response as any of the other issues you will review, and we want to implore you to make this a key component of your bill.

On behalf of my affiliates thank you for holding this public hearing and if you have any questions or comments I would be happy to address them now or at your convenience.

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