



Connecticut Chapter
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*February 5, 2013, Legislative Committee on Aging
Written Testimony submitted by
Jeffrey Arn, Vice President of Housing and Legislation
On behalf of the membership of Conn-NAHRO*

Conn-NAHRO is the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials; its membership is comprised of Public Housing Authorities and other individuals and organizations involved in affordable housing.

Co-Chairmen Ayala and Serra and members of the Aging Committee:

My name is Jeffrey Arn, I am the current, Vice President of Housing and Legislation for Conn-NAHRO, I am the Executive Director of the Vernon Housing Authority and I also serve as a Commissioner for the Coventry Housing Authority. Although I appreciate the well intentioned goal of this bill I am in opposition of Raised Senate Bill No. 79, "**AN ACT REQUIRING ELECTRICAL POWER GENERATORS AT STATE-ASSISTED SENIOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS**", to ensure the health and safety of elderly persons in state-financed housing developments in the event of electrical power outages.

My fellow CONN-NAHRO members have submitted in the written testimony and you will hear in testimony from our Executive Director, this bill has given practitioners of State Assisted Senior Housing cause for great concern. Although, we understand the well-meaning goal of providing generator power to the residents of our senior housing the logistics and costs of such an effort are not practical or feasible. There are several obstacles that inhibit the practical installation of generators at our properties.

First, many of the state funded elderly developments are garden style units with individual electrical meters. This impedes the retrofit of generator power as generator power should be tied in downstream of the meters and this would require separate installations of the required switch gear at each individual meter. Second, many of our apartments were built with electric heat and hot water. This coupled with the lights, Electric Stoves, refrigerators and other electrical draws in each apartment creates the need for an extraordinary amount of power to be generated. This would necessitate the

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need for several large generators at each property. Finally, the practicalities of maintaining and fueling these generators on a regular basis and during an outage are beyond the capabilities of most housing authorities and would be an undue burden on our already overstretched staffs and budgets. All of the aforementioned items add up to make a noble concept impractical and overpriced.

At the one Vernon Housing Authority these factors would combine to an astonishing cost at our one state elderly property Grove Court. This property consists of 54 garden style apartments with 54 individual electric meters in seven buildings. To bring generator power to each individual apartment in the most practical cost effective manor would conservatively cost approximately \$500,000. In addition to the initial installation there would then be routine maintenance and full costs that would be added to our annual budget and all of these costs could only be recouped by increased base rents for our resident. This is one small property at one small housing authority in the state. There are 130 housing authorities in this state and this bill would affect approximately 220 properties containing over 7,600 elderly housing units. The initial cost of these generators, the maintenance and fuel costs could not be borne by a majority of the agencies that run these properties without funding from the State. If the State were to fund these installations it could cost in upwards of \$100 million just for the initial systems.

I suggest that planning for power outages and other disasters on a local level utilizing the already available resources provided by our local municipalities is a more reasonable way to approach the situation. Many of us work closely with our local disaster planners to provide the services needed to our elderly residents when power outages occur and we have kept our tenants safe during recent extended power outages.

In conclusion I would like to reiterate that this is a very well-meaning and thoughtful bill being discussed today. Unfortunately, the practical implementation and costs are prohibitive and would be an extreme financial burden on Housing Authorities and the State of Connecticut.

Thank you allowing me to speak today and I am available to take any questions you may have.