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Wilcox Energy

March 19, 2013

Co-Chair Gary D. LeBeau
Co-Chair Chris Perone
Senator Scott L. Frantz
Representative Gail Lavielle

Commerce Committee:

I am submitting testimony in **opposition to HB 6650.**

My name is David Foster, I grew up in my families heating oil business located in Seymour and now I own Wilcox Energy located in Westbrook with my partner. I am on the Connecticut Energy Marketers Association's (CEMA) Board of Directors and I serve on the state of Connecticut's Heating and Cooling Licensing Board.

The intended use of the money collected through this tax is to fund "weatherization." OK. So why tax heating oil, and propane? It isn't a tax on air travel to fund weatherization, or luxury vehicles, or casinos... it's on heating oil and propane. Presumably that's because there's some justice in that concept, that the heating oil industry, unlike natural gas or electricity, doesn't work very hard to improve the energy efficiency of its customers.

But there is no justice in that concept, because the heating oil industry has an infinitely better record on efficiency improvements than either of the fuels that are exempt from this tax.

Without a single government program, without a single penny of taxpayer money, the oilheat industry has reduced the average household consumption by 35% since the first Energy Crisis in 1973. The industry funded research in new technology, championed that new technology to homeowners, and has consistently upgraded them to more and more efficient equipment, reducing the annual use from an average to 1,300 gallons in 1973, to a mere 800 gallons today.

At our associations self-funded school in Cromwell, we train technicians to be conservation specialists. Every single year, our technicians go into our customers homes and take stock of the combustion efficiencies in their furnaces, the recovery ratings of their water heaters, and the SEER Ratings of their air conditioning equipment, and we present that information to the homeowners with

choices for upgrades to save energy and money. Many of us inspect the insulation in the house as well. That's what we do... that's who we are. That's how we've reduced energy consumption more than any other energy industry.

So where is the justice in singling out heating oil and propane for punishment to fund weatherization programs? I'm here to tell you it's an injustice.

And who do you think is going to pay this tax? Every homeowner, every renter and every tenant. Every part time worker with no health benefits, even if they're living at the poverty level. Could anyone possibly think of a more regressive way to raise revenue, than taxing HEAT?

This tax is perversely unjust in that it singles out an industry universally recognized for our strides in energy efficiency, to be punished with a tax to pay for energy efficiency programs! And this tax will strike cruelly hard at the people who are least able to afford a new tax on the most basic necessity of life – HEAT.

I ask that the Commerce Committee **oppose HB 6650**.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

David Foster

Wilcox Energy