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March 19, 2013

To the Co-Chairs and members of the Commerce Committee

Testimony in support of HB6650 AAC Energy Efficiency Programs

Submitted by Elise Willer, Green Policy Organizer

Good morning, and thank you to Senator LeBeau and Representative Perone for holding a hearing for HB6650.

Connecticut Working Families Organization is in strong support of this legislation as a way to fully fund the Energy Efficiency Fund's programs for all households. Without this legislation, oil-heated homes will lose access to the state's energy efficiency programs on July 1, 2013. This is critical, since fifty percent of Connecticut residents heat their homes with oil.

The current energy efficiency programs are popular and need to be expanded, not cut. The establishment of the Energy Efficiency Fund has resulted in many programs that are already helping Connecticut homeowners and businesses reduce their energy costs by providing subsidies for energy audits, furnaces, boilers and other energy saving projects.

Energy Efficiency Fund programs are an essential first step towards a green economy and a more environmentally sound and affordable Connecticut. There are so many benefits; decreased energy costs to homeowners and businesses, reduced strain on our planet and resources, jobs in the weatherization and light construction sectors, not to mention the advantages to a local economy that come with higher employment and wages being spent. This is a small economic engine that is just starting to revolve and we need to rev it up. And it goes without saying; the weather conditions we've seen lately in Connecticut only highlight how badly we need to combat climate change with efficiency measures.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection estimates that a modest surcharge on fuel oil for 3.5 cents per gallon would fully fund heating oil efficiency programs today. This would ensure a full range of efficiency options for heating oil customers, and ensure that help is available when they are ready to upgrade their home or business.

Protecting this funding is very affordable for ratepayers, and would not be a financial burden. A 3.5 cent surcharge for each gallon would amount to only .01%, only \$25 on a \$2500 annual fuel bill. Scaling back this funding is penny-wise and pound-foolish. I urge you to pas HB6650. Thank you.