WrittenTestimony from Stephanie Weiner of New England Smart Energy Group, LLC Before the Commerce Committee

In Support of
HOUSE BILL 6650, AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Submitted by
Stephanie Weiner
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Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 6650, AAC Energy Efficiency Programs. New England Smart Energy Group is delighted to support this bill.

Our company, New England Smart Energy Group, LLC, an energy services company that participates in the award winning Home Energy Solution program, employs over 16 CT residents and refers business to a multitude of other contractors including solar, HVAC, insulation, windows, duct cleaning, mold and asbestos remediation companies, and the list goes on… In addition, we support many local non-profit organizations and charities through our program. We thank the committee for holding the public hearing and inviting our comments.

We are testifying today because we have seen the harm done when there is no funding for oil heated homes. Almost 80% of our customer's have oil heated homes and

if this bill is not passed they would not be able to save money on their energy bills by participating in the HES program and along with the rebates it has to offer for important upgrades like insulation. In addition, we would have to, as we have twice in the past, lay off many employees, instead of hiring, as we plan to do now. This is the tragic side of the story. These are lives are real human beings with families and children and parents to support who if this decision is not accepted, will experience turmoil and crisis their lives. There is no good reason not to support this bill.

Connecticut's energy efficiency programs help state residents lower their energy usage, which not only cuts bills but also improves air quality and reduces our state's greenhouse gas emissions. However, because fuel oil and propane customers do not pay into the efficiency fund via their heating bills, they have limited access to these programs. Last year's legislation provided a stop-gap, but that will soon expire. **Without action this session to establish a new and steady funding stream, the 48 percent of Connecticut homes that use fuel oil will soon lose most of their access to cost-saving, pollution-cutting programs like Home Energy Solutions. HB 6650 offers a definitive solution by establishing a small surcharge to supply an oil efficiency fund.**

Connecticut's home performance and energy efficiency sector has tremendous growth potential, but only if the ALL residents are able to access energy programs. **Providing full and reliable access to state efficiency programs will dramatically increase use of these services, and enable businesses like ours to train and hire more skilled workers to steady, local well paying jobs they can be proud of!**

It is in the state's interest to help residents burn less heating oil—as well as use less electricity and heat water more efficiently—because this will help meet our obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Global Warming Solutions Act (P.A. 08-98). **Household energy use is responsible for approximately 40 percent our state's GHG emissions, and we cannot significantly reduce emissions from this sector if 48 percent of homes are left out.**

This legislation **will not take money away from the state's General Fund**, nor will it divert money from natural gas and electric heat customers, as funding will be limited to the money collected via the new excise tax.

Please support HB 6650 for the savings it offers to the half of Connecticut ratepayers who heat with oil, for its benefits to air quality and GHG reduction, and for the jobs it will help create at our local efficiency businesses. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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