

March 19, 2013

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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 H.B. 6650, which would place a tax for the first time in Connecticut's history on home heating oil, propane and kerosene.

I'd like to begin by addressing what I believe the proposed heating oil and propane tax is intended to do—inspire energy conservation. I can tell you that if that is in fact the goal, it is completely off target.

Our company has been campaigning for “energy solutions for a greener tomorrow” for over five years. We have dedicated ourselves to educating homeowners about ways they can conserve, and not only by installing higher efficiency equipment, but through true and tried lifestyle changes everyone can make to aide in conservation. It truly is our mission to help homeowners conserve—this is not only good for everyone's pockets, but it is good for the environment too.

In fact, we have partnered with global and local non-profits whose mission revolves around energy conservation. We walk the walk daily with organizations such as Polar Bears International and the Audubon Society and Green Earth Place, among many many others. In addition, we have had such success that other companies have looked to us to help them execute their conservation missions as well.

I know you are probably aware, but as energy prices rise, our family owned energy companies make less—our margin is impacted dramatically. We aren't happy. Customers aren't happy. So how would a tax help any of us now? It won't. Rather, if changing consumer buying behavior is the goal behind this proposed legislation, history tells us that the only possible way to effect this change is through education---and in this case, education about conservation, not an artificial change driven by a meaningless tax—is the key to success. I can't help but draw the comparison to Mayor Bloomberg's proposed soda tax in an effort to decrease the obesity. It's absurd! Such a tax would be a short term band-aide to a long term problem, and the only way to deal with the problem in the first place is thorough education. Education can and will alter consumer buying behavior for the long-term, and that is exactly what we should be focused on here—educating CT state residents about the importance of adopting an energy conservation mindset in their homes. Thank you.

Please oppose H.B. 6650 and avoid any new taxes on heating oil.

Meghan Smith-Gill