

**Written Testimony of Annie Harper, Yale Community Carbon Fund, Yale University Office of Sustainability,
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee
March 4th 2013**

Written Testimony Concerning Governor's Bill 6360 AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF CONNECTICUT'S COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY STRATEGY.

1. Energy efficiency should be the main focus of the comprehensive energy strategy.
2. While I understand the reasons for the focus of the CES on gas conversions, I strongly recommend that the primary focus should be on energy efficiency, whether or not that is part of a program encouraging gas conversions.
3. A mechanism must be established for heating oil customers to contribute to the Energy Efficiency Fund.
4. The details of any financing options must be clearly presented, and there must not be shut-off provisions included in utility-bill financing.
5. A serious effort must be made to require energy use disclosure for residential buildings to ensure that energy efficiency is considered when buying, selling and renting real estate.
6. Regarding outreach to low-income groups:
 - a. For effective outreach to low-income groups, more is needed than *financing* options and *actionable information*. Financing is of little value to those who either do not qualify, or are simply not in a position, economically or psychologically, to incur debt. Actionable information is only actionable to those who are in a position to make 'good' choices. Low income people very often are not in a position to make those good choices even if they wanted to.
 - b. The focus of the strategy seems to be on providing appropriate *financing mechanisms*, and ensuring that people have access to *actionable information*'. As vital as these two approaches are, I fear that they will do little to promote uptake of deeper measures among low income people.
 - c. The report rightly identifies some of the key constraints to reaching out successfully to this segment of the population. One is lack of trust (even when programs are heavily subsidized or free). Another is health and safety issues that need to be

- remediated such as asbestos and knob and tube wiring. I would like to have seen a little more detail on the proposed programs that might address these problems.
- d. I agree that a comprehensive program to make various types of public housing more energy efficient is vital. Again, however, more detail would have been encouraging. The most challenging area will be private landlords who rent to section-8 tenants. Insights into the current ability of municipalities to enforce standards among that group will be important here.
 - e. Strategies to address the landlord/tenant split incentive problems are vital. Again, this is going to be a particularly hard nut to crack and it would have been encouraging to see a range of possible options rather than just one (tax credits).
 - f. A future strategy must be informed by complete data regarding the existing program. Unless we know to whom and with what measures the low income program is currently reaching, we will not be able to identify where the bottlenecks are and therefore what are the appropriate solutions. The 'scorecard' proposed for contractors will be useful not simply as a method for measuring contractor performance, but more fundamentally for identifying problem areas in program design.
 - g. I entirely agree with the statement that "this work could be coordinated with workforce development efforts to train residents in the community for skilled jobs in the trades industry". If we are concerned about low income people, increasing the number of jobs available is as important as reducing their energy consumption.

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