

Written Testimony of Guy West,  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee  
February 7, 2013

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

I am submitting this written testimony as a Connecticut resident who has personally benefited from a Residential Energy Efficiency Evaluation which was, in part, funded by the State of Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund. This evaluation has benefitted my household with reduced oil heating and electrical expenses as well as a heightened sense of awareness as it relates to general energy conservation. Accordingly, I am disappointed to learn that other Connecticut residents as well as businesses which heat with oil are in jeopardy of losing access to the same services I received due to the Connecticut's Energy Efficiency Fund no longer providing funding for residential and business properties which heat with oil after June, 2013. As it is my understanding that over 50% of residential homes in the state are heated by oil, it would indeed be a shame if such a large percentage of Connecticut households would potentially no longer qualify for receiving funding assistance for energy efficiency evaluations. After all, energy conservation is one of the most cost effective means of improving environmental health.

Governor Malloy's "Comprehensive Energy Strategy" which was recently released does not seem to recognize the impact of 50% of the state's residential properties as well as a large percentage of business properties losing access to financial assistance from The Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund for purposes of energy efficiency evaluations and in some instances, rebates and efficiency improvements. While I applaud the Governor's desire and determination to make Connecticut the most energy efficient state in the nation, I do not believe that this can be achieved with over weighted reliance on converting more residences and businesses to natural gas as the strategy proposes. The problems I see with this strategy are as follows:

- Natural gas pipeline expansion could take up to as long as 25 years to be cost effective
- Natural gas, similar to oil, is a finite fossil fuel
- Natural gas prices are volatile
- Purchasing natural gas sends money out of state
  
- Even if the administration's plans were fully carried out, a large percentage, in fact, most oil customers do not live close enough to gas lines to benefit from them

- A large expansion of natural gas use could lock us into high global warming pollution levels for the foreseeable future
- The proposed strategy, with its emphasis on natural gas, fails to address the full range of economic and environmental costs when making decisions on natural gas main expansions

In addition to identifying and implementing a means of sufficiently funding the state's Energy Efficiently Fund to continue oil customer's access to energy assessments, rebates and low-interest financing, I believe that it is essential for increased support for community-based outreach of energy programs. I therefore lobby the state to continue to form partnerships with grassroots organizations to assist in achieving efficiency goals.

My purpose in submitting this testimony is not to comment on every aspect of the Comprehensive Energy Strategy which was released last month, but merely to stress the importance of energy efficiency programs that every Connecticut citizen can participate in and benefit from. Energy efficiency programs have proven to create jobs here in Connecticut. Additionally they promote conservation, which allows for energy cost savings to state residents, who in turn have more disposable income to fuel our state economy. Equally important, such programs benefit the environment by reducing carbon emissions we are releasing into the air.

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