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Good morning Senator Duff, Representative Reed and distinguished members of the Energy and Technology Committee. My name is Nate Brown, and I'm here today on behalf of the Operating Engineers Local 478 an organization that represents nearly 3500 heavy equipment operators throughout Connecticut. I am here today to respectfully request your support of House Bill 6360 AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF CONNECICUTS COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY STRATEGY.

If you look through most Connecticut newspaper classifieds, you will find a small section that lists the price of home heating oil being advertised by a dozen or so companies. In February the average price for a gallon of heating oil was \$4.17. This means that if you are like most Connecticut families who heat their home and water with oil, you can expect to pay over \$3,800 for oil this year. The Governor's plan could mean good news for both Connecticut consumers and construction industry workers as his energy strategy encourages our state's business people and homeowners to convert to cleaner and cheaper natural gas. As he explained it, currently 31% of Connecticut homes use natural gas which is substantially lower usage in our neighboring states (Massachusetts and Rhode Island are at 50% and New Jersey is at 72%). There are also approximately 217,000 homes that currently have access to natural gas mains but continue to heat with oil. The Governor's proposal involves first hooking up those people who have access to current gas transmission lines and then developing new natural gas lines that could serve over 83,000 more homes and businesses – including large users like colleges and universities, factories, hospitals and office buildings – within the next seven years.

In addition to long-term energy savings and reduced carbon emissions, Connecticut's push for more natural gas would create thousands of construction jobs. In 2012, Local 478 had approximately 40 crews working for Yankee Gas changing out old cast iron pipeline infrastructure to fulfill a requirement for the US Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) that was initiated after a number of old natural gas pipelines exploded.

With the onset of the Governor's proposal, we anticipate the transmission pipeline and gas distribution line work could double or even triple in the coming years. In preparation for the workload, we have developed additional curriculum and natural gas transmission or distribution line pipeline training at our training school and through our International's Pipeline Training Program. This proactive approach has enabled us to build crews of high production operators who can safely dig in the street around utilities as well as operators who can handle mass excavation cross country pipelining. We have a solid history of working in conjunction with Yankee Gas and other energy providers and are committed to building an energy infrastructure that will serve Connecticut residents for generations to come.

Many experts agree that natural gas is the best answer for our nation's long-term energy needs and the Governor's plan addresses the biggest challenge of getting the gas from the drilling site to the consumer. Within the next seven years, the State of Connecticut will work in conjunction with various gas and utility companies to oversee the laying of an additional 900 miles of new natural gas transmission and/or distribution lines. The bulk of the funding for this \$800 million plus project will be paid through the utility bills of the homeowners and businesses that are hooked up to the natural gas lines. The financial liability and burden on the state would be limited to short term bonding to cover upfront conversion costs.

Thank you  
Nate Brown