



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

3 Regency Drive, Suite 204, Bloomfield, CT 06002
Tel: 860-216-5858 Fax: 860-206-8954 Web: www.hbact.org

*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

February 7, 2013

To: Senator Paul Doyle, Co-Chairman
Representative David Baram, Co-Chairman
Members of the General Law Committee

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: **HB 5048, AAC the Sale of Copper to Scrap Metal Processors**
HB 6208, AA Requiring Scrap Metal Processors to Properly Identify Sellers of Copper

The HBRA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with about nine hundred (900) member firms statewide employing tens of thousands of CT's citizens. Our members, all small businesses, are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry and to consumers. While our membership has declined over the course of our seven-year Great Recession from its high of 1,500 members, we build between 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in the state each year and engage in countless home remodeling projects.

We support HB 5048 and HB 6208 as a simple and common sense measure to help thwart some thieves from pawning off stolen copper.

Theft from construction sites does occur, albeit infrequently. However, when it does occur it is infuriating to builders and remodelers, costing them thousands of dollars and lost time. As construction materials increase in cost, as they are doing now due to the recovery of housing elsewhere in the nation, copper and other valuable materials will increasingly be targeted by thieves. However, more and more residential contractors are switching away from copper piping to Pex (plastic) water piping. And, some contractors report that extraordinary measures to guard their construction sites, such as fencing and 24-hour guards or monitoring, are more expensive than the cost of theft.

Nonetheless, if thieves know they cannot anonymously sell off their stolen goods, at least here in CT, it might prevent some theft in the first place, although where there is valuable material thieves will find a way to cash in stolen goods. They'll travel over state lines, use fake IDs, or sell stolen goods in an underground black market. Of course, maybe one or two will give their real name to a scrap metal processor and the thief can be added to the top 10 stupid criminals list.

Therefore, please vote to draft and pass favorably a requirement to obtain and log the identity of sellers or scrap copper, and perhaps other metals as well. We urge you to make the requirement and burden on processors as simple as possible given the likely consequence that thieves will find a way around it. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.