



via electronic mail

**Testimony of Donald Vigneau, AIA, Building Energy Codes Manager
Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP)
Before the Committee on Public Safety and Security
Regarding HB 5749, an Act Concerning Revisions to the State Building Code
February 6, 2013**

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP),¹ thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 5749, an Act Concerning Revisions to the State Building Code. NEEP is a regional nonprofit organization that works to accelerate the efficient use of energy in homes, buildings and industry in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. We are committed to this work because saving energy creates a stronger economy, a cleaner environment and a more reliable and affordable energy system.

Personally, I am a resident of Mansfield, a former Connecticut State Building Inspector, a former local building official in East Hartford, and a Connecticut-licensed professional architect, with 50 years experience in the design, review and regulation of building construction.

We are opposed to HB 5749, as the proposed bill would extend maximum state building code cycle adoptions in Connecticut to “...**not less than six years**” following publication of the prior State Building Code. This would give Codes and Standards a license to delay any revision consideration indefinitely.

HB 5749 proposes to allow for a “...more consistent State Building Code...” as well as to “...save resources...” In fact, this bill would accomplish neither.

HB 5749 introduces several inconsistencies with other code cycles in the Department of Public Safety and Construction Services. The proposed bill would not change the current 18 month minimum cycle required by the State Fire Prevention Code (29-291a[a]) nor the State Fire Safety Code (29-292(a)) regulations, thereby putting the State Building Code out of sequence with these principal fire safety and prevention regulations that need to be closely coordinated. It will also negatively delay continuing implementations of Connecticut’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) high-performance building energy standards under 16a-38k-3(c).

¹ These comments are offered by NEEP staff and do not necessarily represent the view of the NEEP Board of Directors, sponsors or partners.

This change **would increase the costs** of construction coordination and complicate the ability of newer, safer and more efficient technologies from being utilized in Connecticut. It would put Connecticut as far behind in the use of up-to-date codes as it has been in its recent history of partial code adoptions.

HB 5749 jeopardizes potential federal funding for state programs.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) provides incentive funding to states committed to reviewing and updating their codes and standards according to the federal determinations published one year after the newest edition of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) or ASHRAE 90.1 building standard,² so as to keep pace with the recommended three year model codes and standards adoption cycle. HB 5749 could put Connecticut in the untenable position of having to substantiate reasons why the state would choose not to adopt the latest determination required by federal legislation and could potentially cost the state future federal funding opportunities.

In conclusion, we urge the Committee to oppose HB 5749, as it is a detriment to life/safety issues and a major concern for economic, energy and environmental policy for the state of Connecticut.

We thank the Committee for this opportunity to provide our perspective on HB 5749. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding this testimony or other matters related to energy efficiency policies in Connecticut and throughout the region.

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² <http://www.energycodes.gov/regulations/determinations>