



**South Norwalk Electric and Water**  
***A Municipal Utility System***  
***Serving the Needs of the Community***

JOHN M. HISCOCK, P.E., General Manager

KEVIN BARBER, Director Admin & Customer Service  
THOMAS F. VILLA P.E., Director of Operations  
SCOTT WHITTIER, Director of Technical Services

**Testimony**  
**Of**  
**John Hiscock, General Manager**  
**South Norwalk Electric and Water**  
**The Second Taxing District of the City of Norwalk**  
**Before the Energy and Technology Committee**  
**February 20, 2014**

**SB-110: An Act Concerning Fraud Prevention in Connecticut's Utility Termination Protection Programs**

Senator Duff, Representative Reed, Senator Chapin and Representative Hoydick and members of the Energy and Technology Committee, I am John Hiscock, General Manager of South Norwalk Electric and Water (SNEW), a municipal utility wholly-owned by the Second Taxing District of the City of Norwalk, an independent special District chartered by the Legislature by Special Act. SNEW owns both a water and electric utility, each of which are subject to the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies' 16-3-100-200 Termination of Gas, Electric, Water and Sewage Utility Service. These Regulations, though well intentioned and for the most part very effective, prevent the termination of service to utility customers with serious or life threatening illnesses (SILTS) however, under a set of poorly articulated rules. SNEW supports the clarification of these rules to prevent abuses by customers who exploit the serious illness and life threatening illnesses rules limiting the utilities' ability to terminate service to customers who should not qualify for this important special treatment.

Senate Bill-110 is designed to provide greater definition and clarity to the existing SILTS Regulations to prevent the abuse of these Regulations by customers with fraudulent illness claims to the detriment of the remaining customer base. In the case of South Norwalk Electric and Water, its electric service territory is in one of the poorer communities in Southwestern Connecticut, the inner city of South Norwalk. SNEW believes that most of its

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**South Norwalk Electric and Water**  
P.O. Box 468  
164 Water Street  
Norwalk, CT 06856-0468  
Telephone: (203) 866-4446  
FAX: (203) 854-0609

**Electric Operations**  
P.O. Box 400  
1 State Street  
Norwalk, CT 06856-0400  
Telephone: (203) 866-3366  
FAX: (203) 890-7491

**Water Operations**  
164 Old Boston Road  
Wilton, CT 06897  
Telephone: (203) 762-7884  
FAX: (203) 834-0578

customers who take advantage of the protection afforded under the SILTS Termination Regulations are being properly and appropriately protected as the Legislature intended, however, an increasing number of customers have taken advantage of the lack of clarity in the SILTS Regulations to abuse the system because of the lack of definition in the Statue and Regulation. SNEW's support of these changes is to prevent customers who do not have life threatening illnesses from using the SILTS procedures to avoid the payment of electric bills. The Bill as written provides a very specific definition of a life threatening illness so that physicians, the utility and PURA can be assured that those seeking protection truly are entitled to that protection. The Bill also limits the protection afforded under the SILTS Termination Regulations to only customers who don't have the ability to pay for utility service by providing income limitations. Every customer who uses SILTS to fraudulently avoid paying for utility service is a burden on all of the other customers in the system. In the case of SNEW, a large portion of its customers are struggling to meet their bills and obligation and are economically disadvantaged.

In closing, I want to make it clear that SNEW supports the protection afforded to individuals with serious and life threatening illnesses that were intended in the original legislation. However, SNEW wants the ability to prohibit the fraudulent use of those protections by individuals who are neither seriously ill nor in a life threatening situation. This Bill is simply about the prevention of fraud and abuse, which financially burdens the entire customer base.