

**Connecticut General Assembly**  
**The Energy and Technology Committee**

March 4, 2014

Raised Bill No. 359, *AAC Concerning Development of Energy-Related Technologies*

**Testimony of Dominion Retail, Inc.**

My name is William Barkas, and I am Manager of State Government Relations for Dominion Retail, Inc. d/b/a Dominion Energy Solutions. My company is a licensed retail energy supplier in 15 states with more than two million customers, including 1.2 million gas and electric consumers. In Connecticut we serve more than 60,000 small mass market customers together with our business partner, Levco Energy.

**SB 359**

The stated purpose of this bill is for the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to "initiate a docket to develop energy-related technologies." This is clearly a very broad mandate that could encompass many types of energy as well as various technologies. It seems to us that we would be remiss in not raising the issue of the future of natural gas in this state. According to a recent industry article, electric generation plants' consumption of natural gas in New England has risen from about 30 percent of electricity produced in 2001 to about 50 percent today. As you are aware, electricity prices have skyrocketed. Price spikes like this are inevitable with growing gas demand since natural gas prices set the marginal price for wholesale electric generation.

Will new energy technologies be able to solve this problem, or will the development of new technologies be thwarted or overshadowed because of rising gas and power prices? Over-regulated markets are harmful to the development of new technologies. To this end, we recommend that this Committee include in SB 359 a requirement that the PURA include in its development of energy-related technologies a comprehensive review of the feasibility and benefits of residential natural gas choice and the unbundling of utility costs for this class of customers. The Connecticut Energy Advisory Board (CEAB) recommended such a review many years ago, but none has been undertaken to the best of our knowledge. Moreover, we recommend that such a PURA investigation be a completely transparent process with full public disclosure of the proceedings and recommendations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments to this Committee on this bill.