

Statement

of

The United Illuminating Company

**Proposed H.B. No. 5467 - AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY REPAIR OF UTILITY
POLES**

ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – February 24, 2015

The United Illuminating Company (UI) would like to offer comments on **Proposed H.B. No. 5467 - AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY REPAIR OF UTILITY POLES.**

UI has reservations with the premise of this bill and urges the committee to reject the bill or amend the language as discussed below.

HB 5467 proposes that any qualified, first responding, domestic or foreign electric company to repair or replace a utility pole damaged as a result of an emergency, and to charge the utility pole owner fair market value for the materials used and the work performed. Under normal circumstances, UI, UI contractors or mutual assistance construction crews from out of state will be the first responders to a damaged pole that causes service interruption. In our opinion and based on recent experience, the bill appears to seek correction to a problem that is addressed in UI Emergency Preparedness Plan filed with and approved by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority on a yearly basis.

Since the crippling storms in the fall of 2011, United Illuminating has requested that operations personnel from both cable television and telecommunications providers be embedded at UI's emergency operations center. This allows for more prompt response to service restoration of utility services that are collocated on facilities (poles). Poles in our service area of Connecticut are owned and maintained by either the electric distribution company or the local telecommunications provider Frontier Communications. In addition, UI practice is to replace a broken utility pole owned and maintained by the local telecommunications provider, if the pole is not replaced within a reasonable period of time, normally 4 to 6 hours, in order for UI to restore electric service interrupted due to damage to a pole during weather events or car vs. pole accidents. The telecommunications company is then billed for the full cost of the replaced pole. It is important to recognize that UI and ATT / Frontier have worked well together for pole maintenance and installation in support of emergency response, normal maintenance or construction requirements to ensure safe and reliable delivery of utility service to our customers.

For these reasons, we urge the Energy & Technology Committee to reject this bill as it is necessary. However, if the Committee decides to act favorably on PHB 5467, we suggest that the bill require that repairs or replacement of a utility pole damaged as a result of vehicle accident or storm emergency be under the direction of the host electric distribution company and to require that the owner of the utility pole be responsible for the fair market value for the materials & labor used and the work performed.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments on **Proposed H.B. No. 5467 - AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY REPAIR OF UTILITY POLES.**

If you have additional questions, please contact Carlos Vazquez, UIL Senior Director of Government Relations at (203) 521-2455 or Al Carbone, Government Relations Professional at (203) 671-4421.