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STATEMENT

In support of

H.B. No. 6985 - An Act Increasing Natural Gas Transportation Capacity

**Connecticut General Assembly
Energy and Technology Committee**

March 17, 2015

The MetroHartford Alliance serves as the region's economic development leader and the City of Hartford's Chamber of Commerce. Our investors include businesses of all sizes, health care providers, arts and higher education institutions as well as the municipalities of North Central Connecticut. Our mission is to ensure that the region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, capital, and talent so that it thrives as one of the country's premier places for all people to live, play, work, and raise a family.

The Alliance offers this statement in support of H.B. No. 6985 - An Act Increasing Natural Gas Transportation Capacity. Connecticut has the unfortunate distinction of having the highest energy prices in the continental United States, while simultaneously facing insufficient access to energy sources. Inadequate natural gas pipeline infrastructure in Connecticut contributes to volatile, increased electricity prices, which in turn stifle our state's economic recovery and the private sector's ability to retain and grow jobs.

Nearly one-third of Connecticut's electric generation is powered by natural gas. During periods of high demand, such as this winter, power generators using natural gas often must buy fuel on the spot market. Generators' purchase of more expensive natural gas due to limited supply leads to significant increases in customers' electric bills. H.B. No. 6985 will facilitate upgrades to Connecticut's natural gas pipeline infrastructure improving fuel access for electric generators serving our state and our region.

Reliable access to affordable energy is key to making Connecticut a place in which the private sector can thrive, grow and create jobs. By increasing our state's natural gas pipeline capacity, we can move closer to reaching Connecticut's energy goal of providing cheaper, cleaner and more reliable energy resources to the citizens and businesses of our state.

The MetroHartford Alliance is a strong advocate for smart investment in our state's infrastructure. Job retention and creation is dependent upon modern communication, energy, transportation, and water infrastructure that supports the efficient and effective movement of freight, information, and people throughout Connecticut. It is vital that lawmakers advance policies that will strengthen our energy infrastructure in order to both enhance reliability and lower costs.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony and encourage the members of the Energy and Technology Committee to support H.B. No. 6985.