

I am Tony Sheridan, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut. I am here to ask that you oppose implementing the following bills, Senate Bills: 4, 78, 79 and 413 and HB 5234.

The first rule of government is to do no harm.

While I understand and appreciate the need for good oversight of public affairs, The Chamber believes that the proposed bills, if enacted, will do serious and permanent damage to a very valuable organization, the Connecticut Municipal Energy Cooperative (CMEEC) an organization that has consistently provided significant value to its ratepayers as well as to their municipal owners. The result of the quality work performed by the men and women at CMEEC is patently obvious by the electrical rates they are able to provide to the home owners and businesses in their service area.

Our complex regulations are frequently cited as complaints about how difficult it is to conduct business in Connecticut. Indeed they are frequently stated as reasons for businesses to move out of the state or to close shop. Many of these regulations are important in that we are proud of the quality of life that they are designed to protect. However, it is also true, that to a large extent, the cost of conducting business in the state relates to many unnecessary regulations imposed on the business community.

The Chamber of Commerce is not anti-regulations where they make sense. We are however, concerned with duplicate and confusing regulations. The proposed Senate and house bills are good example of unnecessary regulations, regulations that will only make it more difficult for CMEEC to provide the excellent service they presently provide to their customers.

As mentioned above, The Chamber appreciates the good intentions that motivated proposing these bills. However, they are simply not needed. You should be aware that corrective action is in the process at the local level. The municipal owners have responded appropriately to make sure that this level of extravagance does not reoccur. Furthermore, efforts are underway at the CMEEC board level to do likewise. An additional layer of bureaucracy imposed by the state will unnecessarily encumber the complex process of securing energy at a competitive rate. The end result will mean increased energy costs for the home owner and businesses alike.

Once again, I remind you of the golden rule in government: do no harm. Please oppose Senate Bills: 4, 78, 79 and 413 and HB 5234.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.