

H.B. 5363

My name is Peter Aziz. I am the owner of BantamWesson, an energy and home services company located in Waterbury. I live in Litchfield.

I stand in opposition to H.B. No. 5363, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CARBON PRICE FOR FOSSIL FUELS SOLD IN CONNECTICUT, which would tax the fuels our customers purchase from us.

For every person moving into CT, 9 people move out. Let's talk about that.

Businesses are leaving the state because the cost of doing business is too high.

People are leaving the state because taxes are too high, and because there are fewer & fewer businesses left to employ them.

Now you propose a heavy tax on heating fuel, which is a basic human need.

Here's what will happen:

The cost of living and working in CT will rise, and even more people will move out.

Since energy costs are a component of every product and service created in the state, CT will become even less competitive, and more businesses will move out.

I know you think I'm forgetting that you plan to give half the money back to the public. But that's a pretty raw deal, isn't it? Give me a dollar, and I'll give you 50 cents?

And you have to create a big, new bureaucracy just to collect and disburse the tax, but growing the state bureaucracy is exactly what voters don't want you to do.

And how long do we think these gullible voters believe they're going to get this awesome deal of 50 cents on the dollar?

Let's look at the state's track record:

The **Gross Earnings Tax** was created to fund the cleanup of underground storage tanks.

Revenues diverted, fund raided, tanks not cleaned up.

CT's Gasoline tax was raised higher and higher, to fund the Special Transportation Fund for repairing our roads and bridges.

Revenues diverted, fund raided, roads and bridges not repaired.

The **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative** was agreed upon, increasing our costs of utility energy, to fund Energy Efficiency Programs.

Revenues diverted, fund raided, conservation programs gutted.

Now you're proposing a third tax on fuels, with the feel-good promise of reducing carbon emissions, and a little shameless vote-buying built into it.

Will voters believe they'll get those checks in the mail after the first year of the program?

Of course not. The state has no credibility. No one believes the money won't be diverted into the General Fund.

Let's change the topic a bit.

Heating oil and propane dealers are universally recognized for going the extra mile to keep their customers warm and help them save energy. We're the good guys.

My company also participates in Energize Connecticut, the state's energy conservation program, which we've done since 2010.

Last year we completed our 10,000th home energy audit, bringing energy savings to people's homes by upgrading their insulation, windows, lighting, heating systems, hot water systems and more.

In the last 8 years we have saved our customers a total of 3 Million gallons of heating oil.

On the electricity side, the average home saves 1,000 kilowatt hours per year, which is a savings of \$210 per year.

Statewide, CT's carbon emissions have already decreased 18% from ten years ago... without a tax.

My point is that conservation programs work in reducing carbon use and carbon emissions.

If your goal is to drive more people and businesses out of the state, hurt working families who can't afford to move away, and not get reelected, this bill is a home run.

But if your goal is to reduce carbon emissions in the state and make it an even more attractive place to live and work, kill this bill and strengthen our energy efficiency and conservation programs.