



Court of Common Council

CITY OF HARTFORD
550 MAIN STREET
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06103

OFFICE OF COUNCILWOMAN WILDALIZ BERMUDEZ

To: Joint Committee on Energy and Technology

Re: Bill [SB 882](#), AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND HOME ENERGY AFFORDABILITY.

Dear members of the Joint Committee on Energy and Technology,

I write to you in **support of Governor's Bill 882**, An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation and Home Energy Affordability, **pending necessary amendments to Section 1**.

As someone who has lived in our capital city of Hartford my entire life, and served as an elected official in my tenure of five years now with the Court of Common Council, I have not just had an opportunity to have Chaired of the City of Hartford's Committee on the Environment, but most importantly, I have both personally seen and experienced first-hand, the adverse impacts of what it means to not have access to energy efficiency and clean energy upgrades.

Bottom line, energy efficiency upgrades are a life-line for low and moderate income communities (LMI) like mine, because energy efficiency upgrades can detect hazardous conditions such as: High Co, mold, gas, leaks and asbestos in our homes. History has shown us, that our Connecticut cities are the hardest hit by these hazards. One might presume that our Housing and/or Health Department Inspectors for the City of Hartford-are enough to eradicate these conditions. However, the reality is that there aren't enough personnel; where there used to be a staff of 35 in the late 1990s, now there is barely a staff of six (6) for Housing inspections for example.

This is precisely why energy efficiency upgrades are vital in LMI communities. Not having equal access to energy efficiency upgrades by LMI is a disservice to our communities who need it the most! Our state of Connecticut is already over-burdened with paying the highest rates in energy bill. Imagine then, LMI communities and how it is already difficult to afford their energy bill. Meanwhile, with equitable energy efficiency



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upgrades to be made available across our state, this is a direct way to cut down on energy costs for homeowners and renters alike.

It is already bad enough that in cities like Hartford, we have some of the oldest housing stock in our state, to be compounded by the fact that our homeownership rate is a little below 30%, with the majority of our housing in Hartford, by non-Connecticut residents. This means that for a big segment our LMI communities, where the average income is \$29,000, (like Hartford's) there are *more* barriers to accessing clean energy upgrades compared to that of affluent communities. Instead, we are left with a system whereby, renters must pay their home energy bills, but do not have the power to make efficiency upgrades; and building owners have no incentive to make upgrades because they do not pay the energy bills.

Meanwhile, our state continues to collect funds on our energy bills that are meant to help us draw down demands and connect to clean energy, but we don't see these benefits being distributed equitably in LMI communities. This is why, the proper support is needed to address this very serious gap.

In closing, I urge you to support Governor's Bill 882 after amending Section 1:

1. Require all supply AND generation to be 100% zero-carbon by 2040,
2. Develop an aggressive final target for greenhouse gas emissions of net zero by 2050,
3. Establish a moratorium on new fossil fuel plants, and
4. Clarify DEEP Commissioner oversight role, including checks and balances and oversight by a Diverse board of community representatives.
5. Ensure the state of CT is inclusive of communities of color and LMI communities in planning and budgeting processes, by appointing members of the community to oversight roles.



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Sincerely,

Court of Common Council member
Resident of Hartford, CT