

## **S.B. 882 – Energy usage disclosures**

### **Testimony of Raphael L. Podolsky**

Energy and Technology Committee public hearing – March 4, 2021

**Recommended Committee action: APPROVAL OF THE BILL**

This testimony is filed in support of S.B. 882, and especially in support of Section 3. Section 3 requires landlords to provide tenants with information about the energy usage of the apartment they are renting, unless all energy costs – electricity, natural gas, and heating fuel – are included in the rent. This is critical information for a tenant to have before renting an apartment, if the tenant will be paying for oil heat or putting electric or natural gas accounts into his or her own name. Section 4 provides equivalent information for home buyers. The bill provides two ways in which the landlord can provide this information:

- If the landlord has had an energy efficiency inspection through any of three systems – U.S. Department of Energy Home Energy Label, HERS Index score, or ENERGY STAR score – the landlord can disclose the score.
- In the alternative, the landlord can disclose for the preceding 12-month period for each energy source (a) the total and the average monthly costs and (b) the total and average monthly usage amounts. Since these accounts may have been in the name of the prior tenant, the bill requires energy providers to make this information available to the landlord.

Although these disclosures will not solve the problem for low-income renters that energy costs are high – cost subsidies will still be essential for low-income households -- they have other real benefits. They give renters an opportunity to evaluate the total cost before renting and they incentivize landlords to make energy improvements, even when the tenant will be paying for the energy, thereby reducing energy usage.

We also recommend the following two technical changes in the wording of the bill:

- Insert into line 126 after the word “providing” “, for costs that will be paid by the tenant.” The required disclosure is only of those costs (one, two, three of them) which the tenant is to pay.
- For the same reason, change “and” to “or” in lines 123, 126, 130, 131, 133, 190, 192, 194, and 197. The disclosure, we assume, is meant to be of all of those three categories for which payment is the responsibility of the tenant.

Raphael L. Podolsky \* Attorney and Policy Advocate \* Email [RPodolsky@ctlegal.org](mailto:RPodolsky@ctlegal.org) \* Phone 860-836-6355