



Greater Hartford Legal Aid

**Testimony in Support of S.B. 882
An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation and Home Energy Affordability.**

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I write in support of passage of S.B. 882, An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation and Home Energy Affordability, in particular Section 3, which would require landlords to provide a Home Energy Label or utility usage data to prospective tenants when listing apartments for rent.

Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc. is a not-for-profit law firm that provides free legal services to low-income residents of the Greater Hartford region. GHLA represents low-income individuals in a variety of civil legal issues, including housing issues. I have represented low-income tenants in housing matters for the past fifteen years, including several utility-related matters before the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority and in related litigation.

According to [the National Low-Income Housing Coalition](#), 31% of Connecticut's renter households, or a 147,514 households, are extremely low-income. 64% of those households are described as "severely cost-burdened," paying more than half their income on rent and utilities. Utility costs disproportionately burden Connecticut's low-income households, at or below 30% of area median income, who pay much larger percentages of their household income to electricity, gas, and other utilities than higher-income households.

Low-income renter households are often concentrated in Connecticut's urban centers, where older, less energy-efficient rental housing contribute to high utility costs. Such households often face difficult choices, between resolving a high utility bill, and preventing a utility shut-off, and paying for rent, food, and other essential living costs.

Requiring landlords to provide utility data to prospective tenants, at the time of leasing, will provide a number of significant benefits. This will promote greater transparency in the leasing transaction, allowing tenants to know and budget for the true cost of renting a unit before entering into a lease, and to compare available rental units based upon a clearer understanding of the full cost of leasing. This new measure will also incentivize landlord investment in energy efficiency improvements, even when utilities are directly billed to tenants, by making energy-efficient units more attractive on the rental market.

I support passage of S.B. 882, an Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation and Home Energy Affordability. Connecticut's low-income renter households struggle with the high cost of utilities, and this measure will help address that very serious concern.

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