

Name: Elaine Carroll

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Organization or Agency: New Haven Symphony Orchestra

Topic: SB00007 - AA STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS FOR CONNECTICUT'S CONSUMERS OF

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General Comments

Testimony:

To: Energy & Technology Committee

From: New Haven Symphony Orchestra

Re: SB 966 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF STANDARD SERVICE ELECTRICITY AND THE REGULATION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES.

Date: February 14, 2023

The New Haven Symphony Orchestra enriches Connecticut's cultural landscape through exceptional performances and education programs that are accessible to residents from all walks of life. Innovative programming offered statewide inspires deeper audience engagement and meaningful artistic and educational collaborations which increase the reach and impact of the Symphony. Authentic commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access move the NHSO to provide representation that reflects the richly diverse communities we serve in all areas of Symphony leadership. In a typical year, our music reaches nearly 40,000 listeners, half of them students.

Rising energy costs in the State of Connecticut are a concern to all non-profit organizations. Our employees earn less than their for-profit counterparts and they are struggling to keep up in the current economic environment. Our donors are impacted by high energy costs, which leaves them less able to support the good work of not-for-profits across the State.

New Haven's utility companies, especially United Illuminating and Southern Connecticut Gas, have played an important role as supporters of the arts. In addition to decades of support from the corporation, United Illuminating employees have lent their expertise to the Symphony's Board of Directors, donated generously to our fundraising efforts, and attended our concert and education programs with their families. These utility companies and their employees do more than provide energy because they are an integral part of the communities they serve.

As you know, the pandemic was devastating to the arts community. As your Symphony re-opened, the utility companies, specifically UI, was instrumental in working with us to "light up the arts" again and they have promised us future support. We are grateful for their support and friendship. While energy and its policies are complicated, I know the importance of having a reliable and cost-effective public utility system. I ask that legislators consider United Illuminating's longtime positive impact on the arts community as they evaluate the full impact of the consequences of this proposed bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elaine C. Carroll, Chief Executive Officer, New Haven Symphony Orchestra