

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

Creative Arts Workshop (CAW) enriches Connecticut’s arts and cultural landscape through exceptional lifelong learning opportunities in the visual arts through workshops and classes, as well as engagement through our exhibition program which are accessible to residents of all ages, income and education levels, and skill levels. Authentic demonstrations of our commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access reflect our commitments in all areas of our organization.

Rising energy costs in the State of Connecticut are a concern to all non-profit organizations. We are among them. 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. And as we worked to improve air quality and circulation due to the pandemic, we took on additional energy costs to keep our public safe. Those commitments to safety and related costs remain.

New Haven’s utility companies, especially United Illuminating and Southern Connecticut Gas, have played an important role as supporters of the arts. 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, and it continues to be felt. As Creative Arts Workshop re-opened after one full year of having its facility closed to staff, the public and our students,, 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 the energy industry and its policies are complicated, I understand 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. Anne Coates, Executive Director, Creative Arts Workshop, 80 Audubon Street, New Haven, CT 06510