

Energy and Technology Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-384

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE LOW-INCOME ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD.

Vote Date: 3/21/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/14/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL: INTRODUCED BY THE ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Low-Income Energy Advisory Board (LIEAB) was established in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 16a-41b to aid agencies and the legislature with matters involving energy-assistance related programs and policies. Since its establishment in 2005, a few changes are recommended in its operations. This bill proposes to make three changes to the LIEAB, which include incorporating the water to the board's purview, requiring the board to make recommendations with heating and water assistance programs, and changing requirements to ensure that the board reports biennially to the Appropriations Committee, the Energy and Technology Committee, and the Human Services Committee.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

Addition and removal of language in section 1 of the bill. Addresses change to the title of one of the Low-Income Energy Water Advisory Board members to the chief executive officer of Operation Fuel. It removes the language of "designated by such organization" and emphasizes the switch to a designee of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Nora Duncan & Claire Coleman, Co-Chairs, Low Income Energy Advisory Board (LIEAB):

LIEAB is in favor of the bill and states that the proposal being brought up to the committee makes three big changes to the LIEAB authorizing statute.

Recommended change: LIEAB recommends changing from "Executive Director" to "Chief Executive Officer" as the Operation Fuel designee which is stated in line 8 of the proposal.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Dillion Matthew, Attorney, Connecticut Legal Services (CLS): CLS is in support of the changes addressed in the bill because they will bring forth water affordability issues and the resulting impact they have on the residents of Connecticut.

Recommended change: From "a representative from Connecticut Legal Services, Inc designated by such organization" to "a representative designated by Connecticut Legal Services. Inc."

Elizabeth Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA): CWWA is in support of SB-384 because expanding the duties of the board would bring a bigger focus on water related programs which would provide more assistance.

Roxanna Booth, Interim CEO, Operational Fuel: Operational Fuel is in support of the language in the bill because it allows the board to consult and help DSS, OPM, and DEEP towards the planning, development, implementation, and coordination of water assistance relating policies and programs.

Encouraging comment: Clarifying that Operation Fuel is led by a CEO instead of an Executive Director.

Angel Serrano, Organizer, CT Citizen Action Group: CCAG is in support because the bill would give the Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board the chance to look out for the states low-income residents when it comes to energy and water expenses.

Aziz Dehkan, Executive Director, CRCJ: CRCJ is in favor of the bill because it would help create programs that would reduce the cost burden of water and energy utilities.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None presented.

Reported by:
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Date: 4/4/2024