



**Substitute Senate Bill No. 384**

**Public Act No. 24-37**

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE LOW-INCOME ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 16a-41b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

(a) There shall be a Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board which shall consist of the following members or their designees: (1) A representative of each electric and gas public service company designated by each such company; (2) the chairperson of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority; (3) the Consumer Counsel; (4) the chief executive [director] officer of Operation Fuel; (5) the executive director of Infoline; (6) the director of the Connecticut Local Administrators of Social Services; (7) [the executive director of Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut] a representative of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc., Greater Hartford Legal Aid or the New Haven Legal Assistance Association, designated by Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.; (8) the Connecticut state director of AARP; (9) a designee of the Norwich Public Utility; (10) a designee of the Independent Connecticut Petroleum Association; (11) two representatives of water companies as defined in section 25-32a, designated by the Connecticut Water Works Association; (12) the executive director of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center; (13)

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the executive director of the Center for Children's Advocacy; (14) the executive director of the Connecticut Green Building Council; and (15) two representatives of the community action agencies administering energy assistance programs under contract with the Department of Social Services, designated by the Connecticut Association for Community Action. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Commissioners of Social Services and Energy and Environmental Protection, or their designees, shall serve as nonvoting members of the board.

(b) The Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board shall advise and assist the Office of Policy and Management and the Department of Social Services in the planning, development, implementation and coordination of energy-assistance-related programs and policies and low-income weatherization assistance programs and policies, shall advise the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection regarding the impact of utility rates and policies, and shall make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding (1) legislation and plans subject to legislative approval, and (2) administration of the block grant program authorized under the Low-Income Energy Assistance Act, as described in section 16a-41a, as amended by this act, to ensure affordable access to residential energy services to low-income state residents.

(c) The Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board may advise and assist the Office of Policy and Management, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in the planning, development, implementation and coordination of water-assistance-related programs and policies, including programs and policies to alleviate the impact of utility rates, and shall make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the availability and implementation of heating and water assistance programs that benefit low-income and moderate-income households,

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including, but not limited to, the Connecticut Low Income Household Water Assistance Program.

[(c)] (d) The board shall elect a chairperson and a vice-chairperson from among its voting members.

[(d)] (e) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, or his or her designee, shall provide notice of meetings to the members of the Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board, provide space for such meetings, maintain minutes and publish reports of the board.

[(e)] (f) The Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board shall convene and devise recommendations to improve the availability, administration and implementation of heating and water assistance programs, particularly those created to benefit low-income households, through coordination and optimization of existing energy efficiency, water conservation and energy assistance programs. [Such recommendations shall consider: (1) How the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Department of Social Services, community action agencies, as defined in section 17b-885, electric distribution companies, as defined in section 16-1, and municipal electric utilities, as defined in section 7-233b, can securely share heating assistance program applicant data, with respect to customer energy usage levels, past participation and eligibility for energy assistance and energy efficiency programs, and other data deemed relevant to improve coordination among such programs and program administrators; (2) the costs and benefits of current energy assistance and energy efficiency programs and how to maximize customer benefits through such customers' participation in any combination of energy assistance and energy efficiency programs; (3) how to streamline the application process for energy assistance and energy efficiency program applicants and the possible development of joint electronic applications; (4) how to make energy assistance and energy efficiency programs more accessible and feasible for tenants in rental housing units, including, but not

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limited to, how to best secure landlord permission for such services; and (5) coordination efforts to best improve boiler and furnace replacement programs.] Not later than [January 1, 2016] October 15, 2024, and biennially thereafter, the Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board shall report such recommendations, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to energy, appropriations and human services.

Sec. 2. Subsection (g) of section 16a-41a of the 2024 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

(g) The Commissioner of Social Services shall submit each plan or report described in subsection (a) of this section to the Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board, established pursuant to section 16a-41b, as amended by this act, not later than seven days prior to submitting such plan or report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to energy and technology, appropriations and human services.

Approved May 21, 2024