



NFIB
304 W. Main St., #205
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**TESTIMONY OF
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS (NFIB)
OPPOSING
HB-5156, AAC A CLIMATE CHANGE SUPERFUND
FEBRUARY 20, 2026**

NFIB is the leading small business association in the nation with thousands of members in Connecticut representing a cross-section of the state's economy. For more than 75 years, NFIB has been advocating on behalf of America's small and independent business owners, both in Washington, D.C., and in all 50 state capitals. NFIB is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven. Since our founding in 1943, NFIB has been exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses and remains so today. On behalf of those small- and independent- job-providers here in Connecticut, NFIB offers the following comments:

NFIB opposes HB-5156 as currently drafted because Connecticut's small businesses simply cannot afford higher energy, heating, or fuel costs.

NFIB represents small businesses engaged in wholesale and retail commerce, professional services, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, restaurants, and other core sectors of our economy. These employers depend on access to affordable and reliable energy to heat their facilities, power equipment, and operate vehicles and delivery fleets. While this legislation is directed at large fossil fuel entities, costs imposed on producers rarely remain there. Significant assessments on energy producers are likely to be reflected in higher fuel prices at the pump, higher natural gas costs, increased electricity rates, and overall higher transportation expenses.

For small businesses already facing some of the highest energy costs in the region, additional price pressures could: reduce hiring capacity, delay capital investment, force price increases on consumers and erode competitiveness relative to neighboring states. NFIB's most recent national *Small Business Energy Survey* shows that 80% of small business owners say energy costs already significantly impact their business. Nearly 6 out of 10 are absorbing those increases through lower profits, and more than half are forced to raise prices.

Small businesses have very few tools to offset rising energy costs. Only 8% were able to switch to a cheaper energy source. For most, there simply is no easy alternative. For contractors, landscapers, delivery services, and many other Main Street employers in Connecticut, fuel is not optional. When energy costs rise, those increases flow directly into operating expenses.

Finally, NFIB is also concerned about the retroactive nature of HB-5156, which imposes strict liability dating back nearly 30 years. Regulatory predictability and risk tolerance is essential to maintaining a stable economic climate. Policies that create uncertainty in energy markets can have long-term consequences for investment and competitiveness.

Small businesses are not energy speculators. They have to accept the prices of necessary commodities at a given time. When energy costs increase, they do not have the leverage or flexibility to shield



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themselves. Any policy that may increase energy prices, even indirectly, must be carefully considered for its impact on small employers.

NFIB recognizes the importance of preparing our state and investing in resilient infrastructure. Small businesses want flood protection, reliable power, and modernized systems. However, those goals must be pursued in a way that does not unintentionally increase operating costs for the small businesses that help drive our economy.

For these reasons, NFIB respectfully urges the Committee to reject HB-5156 as currently drafted. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your consideration of NFIB's concerns surrounding this legislation. For any questions or additional information, please contact Andy Markowski, NFIB's State Director in Connecticut.