

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5041
AN ACT CONCERNING HOME ENERGY AFFORDABILITY FOR HOME
Title: RENTERS.
Vote Date: 3/15/2022
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/1/2022
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Will Haskell, 26th Dist.
Sen. Saud Anwar, 3rd Dist.
Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist.
Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw, 17th Dist.
Rep. Josh Elliott, 88th Dist.
Rep. Christine Palm, 36th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL: The bill would increase transparency of potential energy costs so that renters of residential properties can accurately assess the energy cost of a property.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Commissioner Katie S. Dykes](#), Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection-Supports this bill because of the immediate need to provide customers with transparent information regarding energy costs and what they can expect to pay before they commit to a new home. This legislation provides and incentive to property owners to improve their properties energy efficiency to attract new tenants.

[Shante Hanks](#), Deputy Commissioner of Housing-Supports the bill because "Providing prospective tenants and homeowners with home energy labels will not only help our residents choose efficient, affordable homes but also encourage landlords and sellers to invest in efficiency improvements. Affordability includes cost transparency. Families deciding where to live should have the information they need to make some of the most important financial decisions of their lives."

[Claire E. Coleman](#), Interim Consumer Counsel, State of Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel-Supports this bill because it would provide prospective renters and homeowners with energy cost information, especially as energy costs in Connecticut are amongst the highest in the nation.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Gannon Long](#), Policy & Public Affairs Director, Operation Fuel-Support stating that "Disclosing energy costs up front would help consumers to choose homes that truly suit their budgets. The current system passes energy costs to the renter, who is the person without the agency or resources to seal the building envelope or replace the oil furnace with a heat pump. This bill would provide incentives for landlords to make these improvements and provide a better quality of living for renters in our state."

[Aaron Goode](#), New Haven CT-Support with changes:

- Add a performance metric for water conservation to the disclosure of energy score. The 1-100 EPA Water Score is one such available metric.
- Strengthen the enforcement mechanism by creating an additional class of penalties including possible revocation of licensing while also requiring municipalities to set aside any civil penalties in a fund for energy efficiency programs

[Matt Macunas](#), Legislative Liaison and Associate Director of Regulatory Policy for Connecticut Green Bank-Supports the bill because it would provide the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) with purview over selection of an energy labeling standard and for landlords, require provision of a home energy label to prospective tenants of their dwelling units, with qualifications and exceptions; and allow municipalities civil penalty authority through ordinance adoption

[Samantha Dynowski](#), State Director Sierra Club Connecticut-Supports the bill because it will help renters understand the full cost of occupying a property, and will incentivize landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their properties

[John Erlingheuser](#), Director of Advocacy and Community Outreach, AARP Connecticut. Support

[Raphael L. Podolsky](#), Connecticut Legal Services-Support/w amendment: The amendment would permit the landlord, in lieu of providing an energy label, to disclose the actual monthly and annual heat and utility costs over the past year of occupancy

[Charles J. Rothenberger](#) Save the Sound-Support stating that "Providing renters with information related to the energy expenditures that they will face as they consider signing a lease will (1) provide them with the information that they need in order to make important housing decisions and manage their budgets and (2) provide an incentive for landlords and building owners to make prudent investments in building weatherization and energy efficiency improvements as they seek to attract resident"

[James A. Paley](#) Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven-Support stating that "Renters must pay their home energy bills, but do not have the power to make efficiency upgrades; building owners have no incentive to make upgrades because they do not pay the energy bills. This vicious cycle results in inefficient, uncomfortable, and sometimes unsafe housing conditions.

[Melissa Kops](#), AIA, LEED AP BD+C, LFA Board Advisor, CT Green Building Council Co Chair, Advocacy Committee-Support, because by not providing transparency about utility

costs prospective tenants cannot identify which apartments are the most affordable. For example, "One of our members shared that she recently moved into a 2-bedroom 600 square foot apartment and last month received an electric bill for \$1100. She would have second guessed her decision to move in had she been aware of the cost of utility bills."

[Charles F. Jennes](#) Consultant, Sustainability and Green Building-Support stating that "energy labeling helps protect vulnerable communities by enabling people to make informed decisions about the "total cost" of owning or renting. It helps them avoid situations where energy costs are unexpectedly higher than a monthly mortgage or rent."

[Dirk Larson](#), Buildings Program Coordinator, City of Portland Bureau of planning and Sustainability-Support, stating that Portland Oregon has successfully been running a similar program since 2018.

[Henry E. Auer](#) New Haven, CT-Supports stating that

[Emily Basham](#), New Haven CT-Support

[Michael Uhly](#), New Haven, CT-Support

[Leonard Wyeth](#) AIA CPHD Representing CT Passive House-Support

[Affordable Housing Commission of the City of New Haven](#)-Support

[Lynne Bonnett](#), New Haven CT-Support

[Kathleen Fay](#), New Haven, CT-Support

[Peter Millman](#) Member of the Boards of People's Actions for Clean Energy and for Eastern CT-Support

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Adam Bonoff](#) Greater Bridgeport Property Owners Easton CT-Opposes the bill because it doesn't explain how you get to the score, leaves way to much ambiguity since usage is the driver and the habits of one tenant has little bearing on the usage of another tenant?

[Connecticut REALTOR](#)-Opposes the bill because energy labels require a process that can take weeks to schedule. With the number of properties this would apply to, it could regularly delay the availability of potential rental properties by weeks or months

[John Souza](#), President of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners-Opposes the bill because of the \$500 fine for landlords not providing an energy label

Reported by: Jason Snukis

Date: March 23, 2022