

Housing Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-292

AN ACT CONCERNING HEATING EFFICIENCY IN NEW RESIDENTIAL

Title: CONSTRUCTION AND MAJOR ALTERATIONS OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.

Vote Date: 3/15/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/10/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Michael A. Winkler, 56th Dist.
Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist.
Rep. John K. Hampton, 16th Dist.
Rep. Josh Elliott, 88th Dist.
Rep. Aimee Berger-Girvalo, 111th Dist.
Rep. Christine Palm, 36th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

According to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection CT is currently not on track to meet our greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for either 2030 or 2050. A substantial part of CT's greenhouse gas emissions comes from residential homes, and electrifying residential homes is a key part of the strategy for CT to meet our emission goals. This legislation prohibits new residential buildings from using electric resistance or fossil fuel combustion systems as the primary source of heating, to reduce residential emissions in CT.

This legislation also establishes a program for training and educating construction professionals in certain alternative residential heating sources, so that CT's workforce is prepared to build cleaner residential homes.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Katie Dyke](#), Commissioner-DEEP **Supports** - stating that this legislation is an important step toward reaching our greenhouse gas emission goals. Electric heat pumps already have a

substantially lower carbon footprint than their fossil fuel alternatives, as the electricity grid gets cleaner the carbon footprint for these heat pumps will continue to improve.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Melissa Kopps](#), Board Advisor-Ct Green Building Council **Supports** - stating that "The building sector is the [largest contributor](#) to greenhouse gas emissions in our state, and the residential sector alone uses more energy in Connecticut than Transportation... Heat pumps have demonstrated success in colder climates than ours. The State of Maine is well on its way to meet its goal to install 100,000 heat pumps by 2025 And heat pumps are a proven and reliable technology in Canada".

Cities like New Haven have already begun making progress by mandating that municipal buildings be electrified, but cities have no means to require electrification in privately owned buildings. They recommend that this legislation be amended to also allow municipalities to voluntarily adopt residential electrification sooner than the normal code adoption cycle.

[Amy McLean](#), CT Dir.- Sr. Policy Advocate-Acadia Center **Supports** – stating that 80% of homes in New England and NY rely on fossil fuels for heating. The average home in the northeast spends \$1,000-\$2,600 on heating every winter, sending money out of our local economy and beholden to large international price fluctuations. Heat pumps rely on electricity which is increasingly produced locally through renewable energy sources.

They also cited a study from [RMI](#) that estimated that CT alone burning fossil fuels in buildings led to an additional 318 deaths and \$3.567 billion in health impacts in 2017.

[Bernie Pelletier](#) Vice President People's Action for Clean Energy **Supports** - stating that in 2018 the state called for a 34% reduction in building sector emissions, and that it is far cheaper to make this progress in new buildings than in the already built environment.

[Shannon Laun](#), Staff Attorney-Conservation Law Foundation **Supports**, They recommend that this legislation be amended to mandate that no fossil fuel systems are allowed in new residential buildings, rather than simply mandating that heat pumps serve as the primary heating source. They support this legislation because eliminating fossil fuel heat pumps would reduce emission and improve public health, as indoor air pollution from gas appliances has been shown to cause adverse health impacts.

[Charles Rothenberger](#), Climate - Energy Attorney-Save the Sound **Supports** – stating that CT is not on track to meet our emission reduction requirements and that one major reason is the lack of progress in the reduction of using fossil fuels for heating. The Yale Center on Climate Change and Health has found that even efficient natural gas appliances must be replaced by electric alternatives for us to meet our emission reduction goals.

[Brenda Watson](#), Exec. Dir.-Operation Fuel **Supports** - stating that "Heat pumps vastly improve indoor air quality. Compared to fossil-fuel appliances, heat pumps are 300% more efficient" and that in Maine "is on track to reach the goal of 100,000 heat pumps deployed statewide by 2025. This very month, tens of thousands of households in Maine have made it through the winter using only heat pumps to stay warm."

[Jennifer Rose Gottlieb Elazhari](#), **Supports** - stating that CT must do all that we can to reduce carbon emissions and that putting fossil fuel-based systems into new building is unacceptable.

[Laura Bozzi](#), -[Yale Center on Climate Change and Health](#) **Supports** - stating that residential and commercial buildings account for 25% of CT's emissions, and that we need to focus on these sectors to reach our climate change goals. Electric heat pumps are one of the most effective ways to reduce residential emissions and mandating their use would be a major step in reducing CT's greenhouse gas emissions.

[Aaron Goode](#), **Supports** - stating that fossil fuel combustion inside our homes creates harmful air pollution that leads to premature deaths and increased medical costs. Children living in homes with gas stoves are more likely to develop asthma and the same goes for heating systems. They support legislation that moves us towards cleaner electric heating systems.

[Janet Hoopet](#), **Supports** - stating that we need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and that this legislation moves us forward on that goal.

[Peter Schweinfurth](#) – Chair – [Energy Management Advisory Board for the Town of Greenwich](#), **Supports** - stating that they have been working with the town of Greenwich to improve energy efficiency in their town, and that the impact of this legislation would dramatically improve their efforts to increase energy efficiency.

[Alison Sanchinico](#), **Supports** - stating that "The science speaks for itself regarding climate change. We must act now."

[Susan Eastwood](#), Chair – [Ashford Clean Energy Task Force](#) **Supports** - stating that electric heating is a far more efficient and cleaner way to heat homes

[Kai Addae](#), **Supports**

[Alicia Dolce and Bill Freeman](#), [Celebration Green Design & Build](#) **Supports**

[Pietro Andres](#), **Supports**

[Elena Grewal](#), **Supports**

[Janet Heller](#), **Supports**

[Janet Hooper](#), **Supports**

[Maria Jiang](#), **Supports**

[Stephen Lewis](#), **Supports**

[Peter Millman](#), **Supports**

[Kimberly Stoner](#), **Supports**

[William Valvo](#), **Supports**

[Yann Van Heurck](#), **Supports**

[Yechen Zhao](#), **Supports**

[Briana Benn-Mirandi](#), **Supports**

[Alberto Cifuentes](#) **Supports**

[Henry Auer](#), **Supports**

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Connecticut Realtors](#), **Opposes** – stating that "The costs for these systems could put new construction completely out of reach for many potential home owners... Right now they don't have to replace the first system when doing a renovation, and this proposal would require they do so. Many use electric baseboard heats especially in condominiums and basements to supplement other heating options. Connecticut cannot address housing affordability with proposals like this.

[Jim Perras, CEO-Home Builders - Remodelers Association](#) **Opposes** – stating that this legislation would burden consumers with additional mandates that would increase the cost of housing. "Federal, state, and local regulations currently account for 23.8% of the final price of a newly built home... mandating net zero emission homes will increase the challenges to build". HBRA suggests that CT use an incentive based system for electrification, which would both reduce the cost of housing and accomplish our emissions goals. They also suggested that CT conduct a detailed study on the impact of net-zero building codes would have on housing costs.

[Francis Pickering](#) – Executive Director – WestCOG **Opposes** – stating concerns with what would define a "major alteration" that would require the installation of heat pumps. This legislation could ban the use of "[absorption heat pumps](#)" that have environmental benefits but do use fossil fuels. Would exceptions be made for homes without adequate electric services? And can CT's electrical grid handle the added load from the widespread usage of electrical heat?

[American Petroleum Institute](#), **Opposes** – stating that this legislation limits consumer choice, could increase costs for consumers and not provide reliable heating, and this legislation would increase the demand for electricity without the infrastructure already in place.
[Stewart Saulters, -API](#) **Opposes**

[Kenneth Mita](#), **Opposes** – stating that no one wants to be limited in their choices when building a home with budget constraints. They claimed to have personal experience with unreliable heat pumps and are a backwards step in energy efficiency compared to traditional fossil fuel-based systems. They suggested that CT use more incentives rather than mandates when adopting these green technologies.

[Vladimir Kochkin](#), -National Association of Home Builders **Opposes** – citing a [study](#) on the costs and implications of electrification policies on residential construction. This study found that in cold climates like CT's "cold climate heat pumps" would be necessary and are significantly more expensive than gas alternatives. And the operating costs for heat pumps in cold climates is higher than the operating costs for traditional heating systems. All electric buildings can also lead to increased peaks in electricity loads that would stress the electric grid.

[Christian Herb](#), The Connecticut Energy Marketers Association **Opposes**
[Allie French](#), Executive Director of the Independent Electrical Contractors of New England **Opposes**
[Richard Glownia, J.](#) **Opposes**

[Karen Arpino](#), **Opposes**

The following in the building trade testified in opposition

[Kenneth Boynton](#), **Opposes**

[James Brown](#), **Opposes**

[Michael Kopman-Fried](#), **Opposes**

[Jim Carpenter](#), **Opposes**

[Barbara Laughton](#), -Front Row Kitchens **Opposes**

[Michael Riccio](#), **Opposes**

[Eric Santini](#), **Opposes**

[Dennis Silvestri](#), **Opposes**

[Robert Wiedenmann](#), **Opposes**

[TIM BOBROSKE](#), **Opposes**

The following gas providers testified in opposition

[Peter Battaglio](#), Hocon Gas Inc **Opposes**

[David Gable](#), -Hocon Gas, Inc. **Opposes**

[Josh Greco](#) Hocon Gas, **Opposes**

[John Daniels](#), **Opposes**

[Brian Guarco](#), -STATE LINE PROPANE - OIL **Opposes**

[Erik Robie](#), -AVANGRID-UIL HOLDINGS CORPORATION **Opposes**

[Paula Ryan](#), **Opposes**

[David Sousa](#), -J-A Waterville Oil Service **Opposes**

[The Propane Gas Association of New England](#) **Opposes**

Reported by: William Cromwell

Date: 3/24/2022