

House Republican Press Release

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Time running out in legislature for much-needed energy reforms



House and Senate Republicans today proposed sweeping compromises to stalled energy bills that have been caught in a year-long legislative logjam and will provide consumer relief through efficiencies and conservation and changes in electrical generation.

With less than three weeks left in the legislative session, House and Senate Democrats, who promised a comprehensive energy plan to address rising consumer costs nearly six months ago, have failed to pass any legislation to help with escalating energy and fuel costs. House and Senate Republicans today stepped in to offer alternatives to the failed efforts to deal with the negative ripple effects of industry deregulation.

“This legislature has studied, debated and pondered an energy bill for the last two years, without taking any meaningful action,” said state Rep. Richard Ferrari. “Even with my years of service of the Energy Committee, I will not be able to digest all the components of a huge omnibus bill in a short period of time. We need to be able to consider what the immediate effect, and most importantly the future effects of what our actions will be on our rate payers.”

“My constituents, like all Connecticut rate payers, are fed up with skyrocketing rates and corresponding lack of action by the legislature. I urge the majority party at the Capitol to do something to provide some much-needed relief.”

The Republican measures highlight areas of broad agreement in both the competing House and Senate bills that have been circulating around the Capitol for months and could be approved immediately in both chambers:

Conservation:

- Restore previously raided conservation funds
- Offer an air conditioner/ furnace replacement program
- Expand “Green Buildings” program for state projects.

Generation:

- Require planning to determine current and future generation needs
- Increase required renewable portfolio standards for clean energy and expand Class III renewable credits
- Require municipal utilities to promote renewable energy.

Energy Taxes:

- Make permanent tax exemptions for weatherization products as well compact fluorescent lights

- Create property and sales tax exemptions for hybrid vehicles and those with 40 mpg ratings.

The Republicans also outlined areas where there is broad disagreement on the three general areas, but urged quick action to separate those from where there is overwhelming consensus. Some issues, such as the Republican plans to eliminate the state gasoline tax of 25 cents per gallon for three months and Gov. Rell's cap on the gross receipts tax on oil companies, will be part of the overall budget negotiations.

Rep. Richard Ferrari (R-62) represents Barkhamsted, East Granby, Granby and New Hartford in the General Assembly.