

House Republican Press Release

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REPRESENTATIVE SCRIBNER BACKS PACKAGE TO ADDRESS ENERGY COSTS FOR CONSUMERS



Initiative To Lower Taxes On Utility Companies Would Have Immediate Impact

HARTFORD- On Tuesday, January 23, State Representative David A. Scribner (R-Brookfield, Bethel) joined House Republican Leaders in promoting a number of energy policy changes to provide consumer relief.

Rep. Scribner noted that the package includes measures to roll back Connecticut's gross receipts tax by 50 percent to save \$100 million a year and require the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) to change rates to reflect that cut.

"This is one way the Legislature can have an immediate impact on lowering electricity costs for our constituents," said Rep. Scribner. "It is one thing to talk about the need to give people a break on their utility bills but we have the opportunity to actually make a difference and help families with this proposal."

Rep. Scribner noted that consumers in Brookfield and Bethel have experienced skyrocketing electricity costs since early 2006. Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P) customers were subject to a 22.4 percent rate increase last year. In December, the company received approval to enact an additional 7.7 percent increase on residential and commercial customers, which took effect at the beginning of January. Consumers will feel that impact with the next bills they receive.

Rep. Scribner said that there was legislation before the General Assembly to address energy issues last year but the 120-page bill was simply too comprehensive. He joined fellow House Republican leaders in calling for that proposal to be divided into smaller bills that are acceptable to the majority of legislators in both political parties.

"These are common sense initiatives and clearly, there is widespread support from both Republicans and Democrats," said Rep. Scribner. "They simply have to be brought to the House and Senate floor for a vote. We can debate more comprehensive, long-term strategies in the spring."

The House Republican energy package unveiled today includes measures to:

- Make permanent energy efficiency tax exemptions, first approved in 2005. These exemptions include programmable thermostats, insulation, windows and doors that meet energy star standard, window film, and weather stripping among others. They are due to expire June 30, 2007 and should be extended to continue encouraging consumers to moderate their electric use. Also, extend the tax exemptions to Compact Florescent Light bulbs. These bulbs are proven use 2/3's less energy than an iridescent light bulb.
- Maintain the increase in benefits in the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) that were adopted for winter 2005-2006.
- Expedite siting of distributed generation. Distributed Generation is when private power users build their own power generating facility for their property. This allows companies to produce their own power cheaper than the utilities are selling it for and reduces peak demand, which drives prices high.
- Provide funding for money taken from the Conservation and Load Management Fund (CLMF). The CLMF has been raided by \$26 million each of the last three years. This fund provides grants for businesses to have energy audits and then enact the recommendations.
- Provide \$500 rebates for the replacement of gas, propane, and oil furnaces and boilers that are not energy efficient.