



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

**ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
Testimony
02/27/2020**

To: Chairmen Needleman and Arconti, Ranking Members Formica and Ferraro, and distinguished Members of the Energy & Technology Committee

From: Jim Perras, CEO

Re: **S.B. 177: AAC ENERGY CONSUMPTION DATA AND LABELING (Oppose)**
S.B. 178: AAC ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS (Oppose)
H.B. 5226: AAC ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS (Oppose)

The Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut (HBRA-CT) is a professional trade association with nearly 900 hundred business members statewide, employing tens of thousands of Connecticut residents. Our association of small businesses is comprised of residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry. We build between 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in Connecticut each year and engage in countless home remodeling projects.

Thank you, for the opportunity to provide **testimony in response to SB 177, SB 178 and HB 5226. The HBRA of CT opposes SB 177.** If enacted, SB 177 would require nonresidential property owners of buildings greater than or equal to fifty thousand gross square feet, or two or more buildings on the same parcel that are greater than or equal to one hundred thousand gross square feet, report the previous calendar year's energy consumption data to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. In addition, SB 177 would require residential property owners to disclose, upon request at the time the property is publicly listed for sale or rent, the previous calendar year's energy bills.

As home builders, it is important to our members that prospective buyers of new construction can sell their existing homes with as few obstructions as possible. In addition, historical energy consumption data is not necessarily reflective of the energy efficiency of a home. Rather, it is more reflective of the age, number and energy use habits of existing occupants. As such, use of this data could have the unintended consequence of unfairly disadvantaging larger families when selling their homes. In addition, owners of residential rental properties have no control over energy use by their tenants and could experience similar disadvantages when putting their buildings on the market.

There are practical and logistical concerns as well. For example, oil and propane are not typically sold on a monthly basis and their consumption levels could

Alternatively, the state should improve upon its efforts to educate consumers of energy to alter consumption habits rather than passing legislation that could have negative financial impacts on homeowners and business owners. Therefore, the **HBRA of CT asks the Energy & Technology Committee to reject SB 177.**

If enacted **SB 178** would update state appliance and equipment energy and water efficiency standards. Among other things, this proposal establishes new product standards on selected residential and commercial appliances such as air compressors, commercial dishwashers, computers, faucets, showerheads, air conditioners, and others. It would establish Energy Star ratings as a mandatory minimum for these products sold in Connecticut. As others have stated in the past, this would completely undermine what the Energy Star program was intended to do. The Energy Star program is as successful as it is because it allows consumer to weigh the decision of purchasing an Energy Star product that might cost more. Using ENERGY STAR as a minimum renders the program and its logo meaningless.

If new homes were to be required to contain nothing but Energy Star products it would drive up the cost of a new home and would potentially price thousands of households out of the market. According to a 2020 study released by the National Association of Home Builders, **for every \$1000 increase in the median price of a home, 1096 households are priced out of the market.**¹ SB 178 would mandate that builders install more expensive Energy Star products in a new home that may, in many cases, save little energy that would never be recouped from utility bills over the course of the lifetime of the product. Roughly 25% of the construction costs of a new home are associated with codes and regulations. SB 178 would increase that percentage and increase the number of Connecticut residents that will never realize the American dream of homeownership.

HBRA of CT also opposes this legislation because it would give broad authority to DEEP to conduct inspections of newly constructed buildings containing new products that are subject to the State Building Code prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Additional inspection requirements by an underfunded and understaffed state agency will likely cause undue delays requiring builders to pay more in properties taxes, utilities, property management costs, etc. Additional costs resulting from this new mandate will be absorbed by struggling small businesses or passed on to consumers, further exacerbating affordability issues. Therefore, the **HBRA of CT asks the Energy & Technology Committee to reject SB 178.**

If enacted, **HB 5226** would make void and unenforceable any covenant, restriction or condition in any deed, contract, security instrument or other instrument affecting the transfer or sale of property which prohibits or unreasonably restricts the installation or use of an electric vehicle charging station, In addition HB 5226 would establish conditions to which a unit owner must agree in order to obtain approval for installation of an electric vehicle charging station. Lastly, HB 5226 would permit tenants to request installation of electric vehicle charging stations, subject to compliance with a landlord's requirements.

HBRA of CT opposes HB 5226 as it would allow the installation of electric charging stations by tenants and unit owners 'as of right' if the request and installation conform with statutory requirements. The installation of charging stations should not be mandated upon rental property owners or condo associations. Rather, state government should allow for market demands to shape

¹ <https://www.nahbclassic.org/generic.aspx?sectionID=734&genericContentID=271366&channelID=311>

outcomes. Should the demand for electric charging stations reach critical mass, landlords and associations will have to rise to meet those demands to maintain competitiveness with their peers. As such, the installation of charging stations should not be legislated. The installation of a charging station should remain a contractual agreement between landlords and tenants and condo associations and unit owners where each side has the full protection of contract law. Therefore, the **HBRA of CT asks the Energy & Technology Committee to reject HB 5226.**

Thank you, for the opportunity to provide testimony On SB 177, SB 178 and HB 5226.