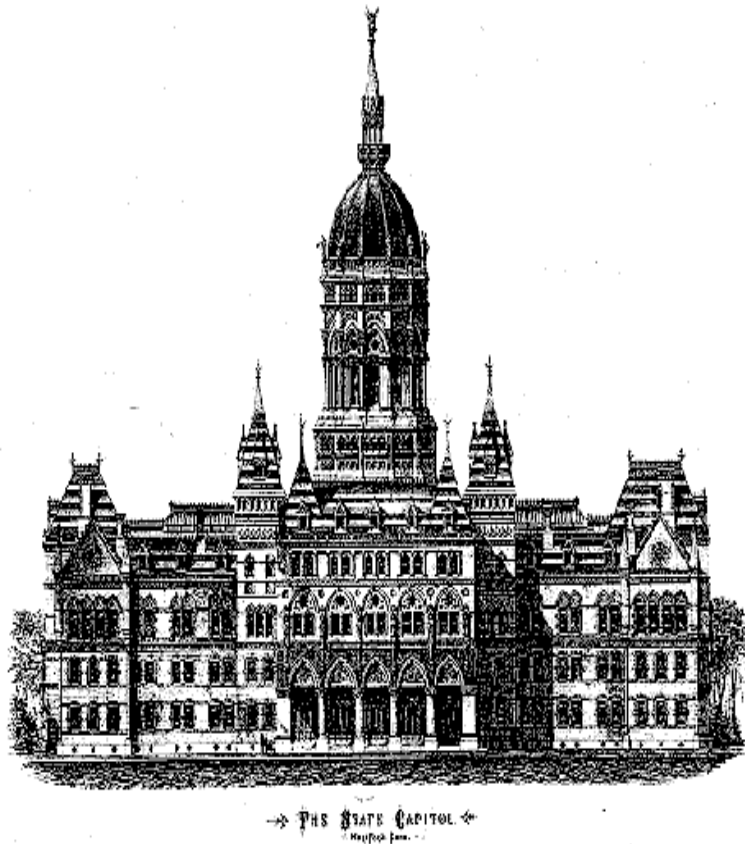


STATE OF CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2011 REGULAR SESSION REPORT



UTILITIES STATE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

**2011 ANNUAL MEETING
MYRTLE BEACH, SC**

**PRESENTED BY:
UIL HOLDINGS CORPORATION
NORTHEAST UTILITIES**

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2011 REGULAR SESSION REPORT

SUMMARY

The 2011 Regular Session of the Connecticut General Assembly, one of the most productive in recent years, culminated at midnight on Wednesday, June 8 with a flurry of passed bills in both chambers.

The 2011 session can be characterized by three things – a new Democratic governor and his administration looking to boost a sagging state economy; the passage of a two-year budget agreement; and the passage of a comprehensive energy bill that included among other things, the formation of a consolidated agency called DEEP – Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

The bill incorporates all of the former DPUC regulatory functions, consumer advocacy (OCC), Connecticut Siting Council, C&LM programs, Clean Energy programs into the new agency.

Senate Bill 1243 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND PLANNING FOR CONNECTICUT'S ENERGY FUTURE (formerly introduced as SB 1) - was unanimously adopted by the House and Senate in the final days of the session. It is the first major energy bill passed by the General Assembly since 2005.

From the outset of the session, the Malloy administration and Democratic majority General Assembly attempted to focus on job creation, but that never really materialized beyond a few pieces of legislation – the UConn Health Center upgrade and the “First Five” economic incentives program. The “first five” initiative allows the state to offer special incentives to the first five businesses that can each bring a minimum of 200 new, full-time jobs to the state within two years. Governor Malloy did indicate in his post-session speech he would like a “special session” sometime in the fall to focus on jobs.

A budget agreement was not only passed, it was done well in advance of the session’s close. According to the Democrats, the two-year, \$40.11 billion budget will help stabilize the state’s finances and help communities avoid having to raise property taxes — the biggest tax burden for many small and mid-sized businesses. The bill does include the largest tax increase in Connecticut history at \$1.4 billion. The budget act included a tentative \$1.6 billion union concession package that was not ratified by the state employee unions in a complicated voting exercise that will concluded on June 24th. Without ratification the budget is not be balanced. The Governor has threatened to lay-off up to 7,500 state employees to fill the gap. He called for a Special Session for June 30th – the last day of the current State Fiscal Year - to deal with this very large budget gap.

Many in the media have called the session one of the most liberal in recent memory; as significant liberal legislation such as paid sick days, in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants, marijuana decriminalization and civil rights were among the passed bills of note.

There was lot going on in the regulatory side of the utility business. In November 2010, UIL Holdings Corporation, the parent company of The United Illuminating Company closed on a deal announced in May 2010 to acquire three gas distribution companies from Iberdrola USA. The

cost of the acquisition of Southern Connecticut Gas Company, Connecticut Natural Gas Corporation and Berkshire Gas Company (Massachusetts) was announced at \$1.296 billion in cash, less net debt of approximately \$411 million. The acquisition transformed UIL into a diversified energy delivery company with approximately 694,000 customers with annual revenues of over \$1.65 billion and almost \$2 billion in average rate base.

Northeast Utilities and NSTAR announced that both companies' Boards of Trustees have unanimously approved a definitive merger agreement that will create one of the nation's largest utilities, with a total enterprise value of \$17.5 billion merger of equals. The Company will continue to be called Northeast Utilities. The new company will be one of the largest utilities in the Country with 3.5 million electric and gas customers in three states. NSTAR shareholders would receive 1.312 Northeast Utilities common shares for each NSTAR share that they own in a transaction with a total equity value of \$9.5 billion and an enterprise value of \$17.5 billion. Northeast Utilities will have dual headquarters in Hartford, CT and Boston, MA.

The merger, as happens regularly in our industry, did not come without controversy. The Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control determined that it did not have jurisdiction over the transaction under the general statutes as it does not include a change in ownership of a Connecticut utility company. The then Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and other officials and politicians made substantial noise and the DPUC conducted a proceeding that affirmed their earlier determination.

The DPUC stance on the merger inserted the legislature into the mix. The Energy & Technology Committee raised a bill to apply to holding company mergers. The bill would have required DPUC approval for changes in the number of directors or trustees of as little as 25%. Thus the general assembly sought to insert state government in corporate governance in a major way. The bill not only would have applied to the NU/NStar merger, but to UIL Holdings for conditions less than change of control for the corporations. The Bill died of No Action in the Senate.

Also in 2010-2011, the Connecticut NU affiliates, CL&P and Yankees Gas both filed rate applications. CL&P received a 2-year combined rate increase of \$111 million on a request of \$177 million. Yankee Gas had requested \$45.7 million over two years and on June 29th the DPUC issued its decision on new rates effective July 20, 2011. In rate year 1 the decision approved a decrease of \$534,000 over current rates and effective July 1, 2012 an increase of approximately \$6.18 million over today's rates with an approved ROE set at 8.83%.

ENERGY and TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Only three bills that were reported favorably by Energy & Technology Committee were adopted by the General Assembly. The Committee had over 100 bills referred to it. Forty three (43) of those had public hearings thirty (30) were reported favorably. Electric and gas companies were “touched” by 24 of the JFd bills. Some of the concepts of the JFd bills were included in SB 1243.

In addition, the budget act and implementer bills repealed the use of the EDCs Competitive Transition Assessment (CTA) and a 1/3 portion of the Energy Efficiency Fund to pay for state bonds to plug a gap in the FY 2010 budget. CL&P’s CTA expired in December 2010. Its customers began paying a portion of the former CTA (\$40 million) on 1/1/2011 and would have continued paying the fee to pay for the bonds. UI customers would have started paying a similar fee upon termination of CTA recovery in late 2013.

SB 1243 - AAC THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND PLANNING FOR CONNECTICUT'S ENERGY FUTURE – Public Act 11-80

This bill creates the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) by merging the departments of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Public Utility Control (DPUC). In addition to the duties and powers inherited from those departments, the bill gives DEEP new energy-related planning and oversight responsibilities and transfers various energy-related responsibilities and powers from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to it.

Among other provisions, the bill:

- authorizes 30 MWs of new Class I renewable generation facilities. UI and CL&P are authorized to develop, own and operate up to 10 MWs each under CGS 16-19 (cost of service regulation).
- renames the Public Utility Control Authority (the commissioners who run DPUC) the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) and reduces the number of commissioners from five to three and renames them directors
- requires DEEP to develop a comprehensive plan integrating current efficiency and renewable energy plans
- requires DEEP, rather than the electric companies, to prepare the integrated resources plan (IRP), which seeks to meet electric needs through a mix of efficiency programs and power generation, and modifies the planning process
- requires DEEP to employ an electric power procurement manager and requires the manager, rather than the electric companies, to develop the plan for procuring power for the standard service the companies must provide to small customers who do not choose a competitive supplier
- modifies how this power is procured, eliminating a requirement for laddering, allowing for short term contracts, and making other changes
- requires electric companies and generators to notify DEEP of any prospective reliability concerns and DEEP to conduct a request for proposals (RFP) for efficiency and generation measures to avoid such problems
- expands the resources that can go into the Clean Energy Fund to include private capital and revenues reallocated to the fund by the legislature and creates a quasi-public authority (the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority) to administer the fund, rather than Connecticut Innovations, Inc.

- expands the types of projects the fund can support to include electric and natural gas vehicle infrastructure, electricity storage, and the financing of energy efficiency
- allows municipalities to establish a loan program to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, whose costs are recovered by an assessment on the benefitted property (PACE)
- requires the energy efficiency and renewable energy plans developed under current law to provide equitable funding for low-income neighborhoods
- establishes energy efficiency standards for consumer electronics and broadens circumstances when efficiency standards would be implemented for other consumer products
- establishes three-year pilot programs to develop combined heat and power and anaerobic digester projects and provides \$ 2 million annually for each of the programs
- requires the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority to establish a program to promote residential photovoltaic systems under which participants can choose to receive an up-front payment or a payment tied to the power the systems produce
- establishes a program that requires electric companies to enter into long-term contracts to buy renewable energy credits (RECs) from zero-emission generators (e. g. , solar, wind, hydro) establishes a similar program for low-emission technologies
- requires PURA to study the feasibility of establishing discounted electric and gas rates for low-income customers by reallocating existing supports for these customers.
- establishes a code of conduct for competitive electric
- requires DEEP to establish an on-bill finance program for replacement residential heating equipment that is more energy efficient than the customer's current equipment
- requires DEEP to develop a plan to reduce energy use in state buildings by at least 10% by 2013 and another 10% by 2018
- bars electric and gas utilities from terminating service year-round to hardship customers with children under 24 months old who are hospitalized if the attending physician determines that utility service is needed for the child's well-being
- allows municipal customers of electric companies to share net metering credits among buildings the municipality owns (virtual net metering for generation service only)
- explicitly authorizes state agencies and municipalities to enter into energy saving performance contracts
- modifies Green Connecticut Loan Guaranty Fund program, requires program measures to meet cost-effectiveness standards and transfers its administration to the new authority
- expands evaluation requirements for efficiency programs
- requires electric suppliers to bill their customers for their services or contract with EDCs to provide billing services
- establishes a new process for patching of utility street excavations
- requires DEEP to conduct a number of studies.

Most sections of the Public Act are effective on July 1, 2011. A handful of sections are effective upon the Governor's signature or October 1, 2011. The Act is 140 Sections and 273 pages long. Below are the links to the PA 11-80 and the OLR Bill Analysis for additional information and details.

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/ACT/Pa/pdf/2011PA-00080-R00SB-01243-PA.pdf>

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/BA/2011SB-01243-R01-BA.htm>

HB 6250 – AAC THE CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

This bill **as adopted** changes the standard of review for power plants and telecommunications towers seeking a certificate from the Siting Council. EDCs lobbied successfully to limit the bill's key provisions to siting telecommunications towers.

The bill requires that telecommunications tower developers begin consulting with potentially affected municipalities 90, rather than 60, days before applying for a Siting Council certificate. It also expands the scope of this consultation. It limits the circumstances in which the council can approve a tower proposed for installation near a school or commercial day care center. This bill expands the factors the Siting Council must consider in granting a certificate for a telecommunications tower and requires the council to examine the latest facility design options intended to minimize aesthetic and environmental impacts. The bill also requires the council to consider neighborhood concerns regarding the factors it must already take into account, including public safety.

HB 5802 – AA ADOPTING CERTAIN SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THOMAS COMMISSION – Public Act 11-101

This bill codifies several safety provisions of the Thomas Commission Report and Executive Order No. 45 (issued by then Governor Rell). The Commission conducted a study triggered by the explosion of the Kleen Energy power plant in Middletown. The bill prohibits anyone from using flammable gas to clean or blow an electric generating facility's (power plant) gas piping. It prohibits the Connecticut Siting Council from issuing a certificate to build a power plant unless the applicant demonstrates, to the council's satisfaction, that he or she (1) has retained, for the project's duration, at least one special inspector to help the local fire marshal review construction plans and inspect the facility during construction and (2) paid a fee the bill establishes to be used to help train local fire marshals in power plant construction issues.

The bill requires the Siting Council to meet with and solicit comments from specified state agencies when considering applications to build power plants. It requires that at least once during construction, the council and some of the agencies meet to discuss any known or potential safety issue at the power plant and submit any proposed resolutions to the project's special inspector.

SB 1024 – AA MODERNIZING THE STATE'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS LAWS (Bill as adopted by the Senate, died of No Action on the House calendar.)

Despite its title, the bill contained provisions applicable to all entities regulated by the DPUC. Under the bill, each document submitted to DPUC is considered filed on the date and at the time DPUC first receives a complete electronic or paper version of it, so long as it filed in accordance with relevant DPUC regulations and any required fee is paid. If a document is electronically submitted outside of DPUC's normal business hours, DPUC must consider the document to be filed when its offices next open. Under the bill, DPUC may not require the filing of paper versions of electronic filings, except it may require that (1) three paper copies be mailed to it; (2) at its request, one paper copy be mailed to a party or intervenor in a specific DPUC docket who does not have computer access; and (3) three paper copies be mailed to the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) at OCC's request..

SB 1079 – AAC THE APPOINTMENT OF A RECEIVER FOR CERTAIN UTILITY CUSTOMERS AND THE EXAMINATION OF THE DECOUPLING OF REVENUES BY GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANIES (The revised bill died of No Action on the Senate Calendar. Some of its provisions were included in SB 1243.)

The original bill included all of UIL Holdings Corporation's proactive legislative requests for the 2011 Session. The bill as JFd by the Energy & Technology Committee included the provisions applicable to the appointment of a receiver for patient charges for nursing homes that do not pay their utility bills. It also included a study of decoupling of revenues for gas n electric distribution companies. The bill's provisions included in SB 1243 appear in *italics*.

The original bill included the following proposals:

- *To require that decoupling of utility company revenues occur through a revenue adjustment rather than rate design changes. SB 1243 includes a study of decoupling of revenues from sales*
- *to permit electric distribution companies to construct, own and operate renewable energy generation facilities and customer-side distributed resource generation facilities. SB 1243 allows EDCs up to 10 MWs of renewable generation facilities*
- to permit utility service termination on Fridays for certain accounts
- to allow a utility company to seek appointment of a receiver for certain nursing home facilities
- to permit a gas company to recover additional indirect costs of the gas commodity pursuant to the purchased gas adjustment clause

The EDCs revised proposal to allow service termination of service to non-hardship customers on Fridays is supported by the Senate Chair of the committee and was still in play late in session for inclusion in amendments to other Energy bills. The Senator agreed to reintroduce the concept bill in 2012.

SB 1140 – AAC THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITY CONTROL'S JURISDICTION REGARDING HOLDING COMPANIES (Bill died of No Action on the Senate calendar.)

The original bill sought expand the instances of when a holding company needs the Department of Public Utility Control's approval to acquire control over a gas, electric, electric distribution, water, telephone or community antenna television company.

The bill was aimed at requiring DPUC review and approval of the NU/NStar merger. However, the bill went well beyond that goal. The Department had previously determined, and reaffirmed its determination that it does not have jurisdiction over NU's acquisition of an out of state holding company that did not include change of ownership of a Connecticut utility.

NU and UIL strongly opposed the bill as a severe intrusion of state government into the corporate governance responsibilities of shareholders and members of the board of directors. The bill would have required a utility holding company to seek Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) approval for corporate decisions that fall far short of change of control. The holding company would have been required to get approval when more than 25% of the members of the board of

directors of a utility holding company are desired to be “replaced” or when the number of directors is increased by at least 25%.

SB 1141 – AAC NET METERING (Bill was Recommitted to E&T. The revised concept was included in SB 1243.)

The original bill would have permitted virtual net metering for a customer hosting a Class I renewable generator and up to 5 beneficial accounts designated by the host customer.

The EDCs opposed the bill as it would result in a shift of costs to support the transmission and distribution system from customers who participate in net metering to those who do not. The result is that rates will go up for non-participating customers. The language of the bill would allow any beneficial account to receive credit for **all** current retail charges on their electric bills associated with the generation from the virtual net metering facility. The result is that both the customer host *and* all designated beneficial accounts receive credit for their competitive transition assessment (CTA) charge, systems benefits charge (SBC), conservation and load management (CLM) charge, the renewable energy investment (REI) charge, along with their transmission and distribution (T&D) charges.

The provisions of SB 1243 permit virtual net metering of generation service for municipal host customers and up to 5 municipal beneficial accounts.

SB 1169 – AAC ROAD CUTS (Concept of the bill is included in SB 1243)

The bill requires utilities that cut a public highway in the course of repairs or installations to send a notice to the public works department of the municipality where the cut was made, notice of any temporary and permanent patches made to repair the cut. The notice would also include a certification by the utility or contractor that the patches meet generally accepted repair standards. For one year after the department receives the notice, the utility and the contractor, if applicable, must share responsibility for any additional repairs needed, as determined by the local official.

HB 5847 – AAC TIME FRAMES FOR INTERCONNECTION PROJECTS (Bill died of No Action on the House Calendar)

Under current law, electric utility companies, including municipal electric utilities, must interconnect with and buy electricity from any non-utility generator that wishes to sell power generated solely with cogeneration technology or renewable energy resources. The utility and the generator must negotiate a contract for such a sale in good faith, although the Department of Public Utility Control determines the rates and conditions of service.

Under this bill, if the utility and non-utility generator cannot agree to a sales contract within 90 days after the utility receives the generator's written contract proposal, the utility must give the generator a written explanation of why it rejected the proposal.

HB 6249 – AA REQUIRING THE ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS FOR SITING OF WIND PROJECTS (Bill Passed)

This bill requires the Connecticut Siting Council by July 1, 2012 and in consultation with the departments of Public Utility Control and Environmental Protection (DEEP), to adopt regulations concerning the siting of wind turbines. The regulations must at least consider (1) setbacks, including tower height and distance from neighboring properties; (2) flicker; (3) a requirement for the developer to decommission the facility at the end of its useful life; (4) different requirements for different size projects; (5) ice throw; (6) blade shear; (7) noise; and (8) impact on natural resources. The regulations must also require a public hearing for wind turbine projects.

HB 6017 – AAC THE PAYMENT OF SECURITY DEPOSITS FOR ELECTRIC, GAS OR WATER SERVICE (Bill died of No Action on the House Calendar)

The original bill would have prohibited utility companies from requiring reconnect fees or security deposits for accounts disconnected for non payment. The state's electric and gas distribution companies strongly opposed the bill for the potential negative impact on collection of past due accounts and uncollectible balances.

This bill referred by E&T prohibits utility companies, except municipal utilities, from requiring a security deposit to reinstate a residential customer's electric, gas, or water service if (1) the service was terminated for nonpayment of an overdue account and (2) it was the first time the account had ever been terminated for nonpayment. Current law prohibits utility companies from refusing electric, gas, or water service to a residential customer who is financially unable to pay a security deposit.

HB 6403 – AAC UTILITY TERMINATION FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH A CHILD NOT MORE THAN TWENTY-FOR MONTHS OLD (Revised concept included in SB 1243)

The original bill would have extended the winter disconnect moratorium by two months for hardship customers with a 24-month old child in residence. The state's electric and gas distribution companies opposed the bill as difficult to administer and the negative impact on utility uncollectible accounts.

A revised disconnect prohibition was adopted. Section 120 of SB1243 makes the disconnect prohibition apply year-round in cases where hardship customers have a child up to 24 months old who (1) lives in the customer's household, (2) has been admitted to the hospital, and (3) has received discharge papers on which the attending physician has indicated that utility service is needed.

HB 6405 – AAC CERTIFICATION OF SERIOUSLY ILL UTILITY CUSTOMERS (Bill died of No Action on the House Calendar)

The original bill would have allowed Advanced Practice Registered Nurses to certify to a utility company or electric supplier that one of its customers is seriously ill and such company or supplier should not terminate the customer's service. Currently only licensed physicians could certify [the status](#).

The Senate Chair believes that customers that are certified as having a life-threatening condition which makes them eligible for a year-round utility disconnect protection for non payment should also demonstrated that they do not have the means to pay their utility bills. UIL companies

supported some form of financial means test or the ability to file automatic liens against such customers properties. The concept proved to be too controversial for consideration late in session and the efforts were discontinued.

HB 6459 – AAC RENEWABLE RESOURCE GENERATION (Revised concept included in SB1243)

The original bill would have allowed EDCs to purchase, own or operate a generation facility for Class I or Class II renewable energy resources (up to 5 MWs per company) for the purpose of meeting state or federal renewable resource portfolio standards. SB 1243 includes equivalent provisions at a 10 MWs level.

HB 6592 – AAC THE OPERATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITY CONTROL (Bill died of no action on the House calendar. The Department’s proposal for a supplier code of conduct was included in SB 1243)

The original bill included the DPUC’s legislative request for 2011. Distribution companies did not oppose most of the bill’s provisions that have been requested for several years. However, a coalition of other regulated utilities and telecommunication carriers opposed the expansion of sanctions the DPUC could impose for violation of utility laws.

By law, utility companies and a variety of other entities in DPUC's jurisdiction must obey its orders and are subject to civil penalties if they disobey an order or violate the utility laws. Under the bill, if it appears to DPUC, that any of these entities has violated any provision of the utility laws, regulations, rules, or orders, DPUC may order it to (1) make restitution of any sums it obtained in violation of these provisions, plus interest; (2) disgorge any money obtained in violation of these provisions; or (3) both make restitution and provide disgorgement. These remedies are in addition to DPUC's existing powers.

Investor owned utilities’ lobbying efforts were successful in preventing the following bills from being referred favorably to the House or Senate.

- **HB 5207 – AAC A SPECIAL ELECTRICITY RATE FOR SENIORS WHO HEAT THEIR HOMES WITH ELECTRICITY** Discount rate for Seniors
- **HB 5208 - AAC LIENS PLACED ON REAL PROPERTY BY ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES** To allow electric companies to place liens on real property in order to provide notice to prospective purchasers of an outstanding balance owed. Also would have prohibited collection of balances if the lien is not filed.
- **HB 5209 – AAC THE BILLING OF LANDLORDS AND TENANTS BY ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES** To allow an electric company to transfer a billing account from a landlord's name to a tenant's name upon request by the landlord, without the tenant’s consent, after certain repairs are completed in cases involving mixed wiring of apartments and common areas in multi-family buildings.
- **HB 5962 – AA PROMOTING THE USE OF IN-STATE SUBCONTRACTORS BY ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES** To require electric utilities to use in-state subcontractors. The bill did not require that the contractor have utility grade experience.
- **SB 359 - AAC EMPLOYER NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES REGARDING MANDATORY OVERTIME** Would require an employer to provide 24-hour notice of mandatory overtime work. This would have interfered with restoration of service during

emergency conditions when overtime becomes mandatory until the emergency terminates.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE BILLS RAISED and TRACKED DURING THE 2011 REGULAR SESSION

Numerous other bills which came out of various committees during the 2011 regular session were also tracked. Below are some of the most prominent proposals.

LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

SB 913 - AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES (this bill was passed by the House and Senate and signed into law by the Governor on June 8).

The bill required employers with fifty or more employees to provide paid sick leave to certain employees for use for the employee's sickness, the employee's child's, parent's or spouse's sickness, or to deal with sexual assault or family violence issues. Much of the business community, including the CBIA, opposed this bill.

HB 6096 – AN ACT PRESERVING GOOD CAUSE FOR LATE FILING OF CERTAIN UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION APPEALS (The bill passed the House and Senate and signed into law by Governor Malloy on June 3 and takes effect on October 1).

This bill extends the deadline to appeal certain unemployment compensation decisions if the appealing party (1) can show “good cause” for the delay in appealing or (2) has an appeal filed by mail postmarked prior to the deadline. Appeals postmarked by private postage meters do not qualify for the extension. The extension applies to decisions finding (1) overpayment of unemployment benefits, (2) receipt of such benefits through fraud, or (3) false claims for benefits. The law allows 21 days for claimants to appeal a determination that they received more benefits than they were entitled to receive, received benefits through fraud, or made a false claim for benefits. The time limit begins when the determination notice is mailed to the claimant.

HB 5284 - AN ACT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATORY EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AND THE USE OF CREDIT REPORTS IN EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS (this bill died in the Judiciary Committee)

The bill sought to prevent an employee or prospective employee from being subject to discrimination on the basis of his or her credit history.

HB 5460 – AN ACT CONCERNING CAPTIVE AUDIENCE MEETINGS (this bill passed the House after a nine-hour floor debate; but died of no action on the Senate Calendar.)

The bill prohibited an employer from coercing employees into attending or participating in meetings sponsored by the employer concerning the employer's views on religious or political matters. This bill was strongly opposed by the business community, led by the CBIA, as it would place an unreasonable burden on businesses in the state, including UIL and its subsidiaries. It would encumber an employer's ability to communicate in the workplace and hinder potential charitable activities.

HB 6407 – AN ACT ALLOWING EMPLOYERS TO PAY WAGES USING PAYROLL CARDS (The bill passed the House, but died of no action on the Senate Calendar).

The bill would allow employers to pay his or her employee's wages using payroll cards, and to allow certain wage and hour information provided by an employer to employees be delivered electronically provided certain conditions are met.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

HB 6215 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ORANGE TRAIN STATION (The bill passed the House and Senate on the final day of session).

The bill would provide a funding source for construction of the proposed Orange Train Station, which would be located less than 1 mile from the UI central facility campus on Marsh Hill Road. In the event federal or state funding for the construction of the proposed Orange Train Station is not available for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, the Department of Transportation is authorized to enter into an agreement, on behalf of the state, with a property developer and the property owner of the site (DiChello Distributors) of the proposed Orange Train Station, for the construction and operation of such station.

COMMERCE COMMITTEE

HB 6525 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONTINUANCE OF THE MAJORITY LEADERS' JOB GROWTH ROUNDTABLE (this bill passed the House and Senate)

The bill implemented the recommendations of the Majority Leaders' Job Growth Roundtable. This bill establishes and modifies several economic development programs, makes structural and procedural changes to two quasi-public state development agencies, and requires two studies. Some of the highlights of the bill include:

1. requires the transportation and administrative services commissioners to study and report on the costs and benefits of converting a portion of the state's auto fleet to alternative energy sources (§3);
2. establishes a task force to promote innovative business leaders (§ 9);
3. allows the Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development (OBRD) to enter into cooperative funding agreements with other entities (§ 10);
4. revamps the Innovation Network for Economic Development (§ 11);
5. makes the DECD commissioner chairperson of the Connecticut Development Authority's (CDA) board of directors and changes a CDA reporting requirement (§ 12);
6. allows the DECD commissioner to create the Learn Here, Live Here program to provide incentives for graduates 60 buy a first home in Connecticut (§§ 30-32);
7. eliminates the 21-member Connecticut Competitiveness Council, which PA 10-75 established to promote the state's industry clusters.

HB 6526 - AN ACT CONCERNING BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION AND DEVELOPMENT AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER (This bill passed both in the House and Senate.)

The bill encourages the development of the state's brownfields.

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HB 6474 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESOLUTION OF LIENS IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION CASES (the bill passed the House and Senate).

The bill revised the amount of reimbursement received by an employer that has paid workers' compensation benefits to an injured employee when the employee brings an action against a third-party tort feaser and recovers damages.

HB 6599 - AN ACT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION (the bill passed the House and Senate after extremely long debates; and was signed into law by the Governor on June 14).

The bill prohibits discrimination in various contexts on the basis of gender identity or expression, including a section for transgender individuals.

BANKS COMMITTEE

SB 958 - AN ACT CONCERNING CHILD IDENTITY THEFT (The bill passed by House and Senate)

Utilities supported the passage of this bill, which will protect children by closing a loophole that excludes the use of personal identifying information of children to obtain or attempt to obtain, in the name of a third party, money, credit, goods, services, property or medical information without such children's consent from the definition of identity theft.

This bill expands the type of conduct that constitutes an identity theft crime. Under current law, this crime involves knowingly using another person's personal identifying information to obtain or attempt to obtain, in the person's name and without his or her consent, money, credit, goods, services, property, or medical information. The bill deletes the requirement that the perpetrator must use or attempt to use the person's name for the action to constitute a crime. **The bill applies to the establishment of utility accounts under these conditions.**

GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE

SB 1089 - AN ACT PROHIBITING PRICE GOUGING DURING SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS AND MAKING MINOR AND TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO THE UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT AND DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION STATUTES (this bill passed the Senate, but died of no action on the House calendar).

The bill sought to provide the Department of Consumer Protection and other state agencies with various options concerning notice to interested parties, to repeal and make adjustments regarding an unnecessary administrative liquor fee and to protect consumers from price gouging during severe weather market disruptions.

www.cga.ct.gov – Connecticut General Assembly website