



NY HEAT Act (S.4158 Krueger/A.4870 Simon)

OPPOSE

We are writing to express our strong opposition to S.2016-A Krueger/A.4592-A Fahy on behalf of the 22,000 men and women of the NYS IBEW Utility Labor Council of NYS and Local 1-2 UWUA. While we appreciate the state's commitment to advancing energy efficiency and sustainability, we believe that certain provisions of this bill could have adverse effects on our workforce, the reliability of utility services, and the broader impact on the communities will serve.

This legislation sets up unrealistic expectations for the transition away from gas toward electricity. It calls for a 6% cap on energy spending as a portion of income for low wage earners. We oppose the 6% cap on low to moderate income customers as this will either shift all those additional costs to our members or create a situation where utility employers will seek relief through collective bargaining. In addition, it suggests that electricity should be the sole source of heating and cooling and requires customers be protected from high costs associated with the purchase and operation of such equipment. One doesn't need to be an economist to understand that this transition will be very costly and that someone must pay for it. This cost will inevitably fall on the customers and the members that we represent who will bear the brunt of these measures, including the anger of the public. Unfortunately it will be the utility workers in the streets and the customer service representatives on the phones who the public will blame for higher energy prices and service problems associated with this legislation.

This legislation continues to be void of any true safety net language that would require the continuance of gas if electricity was unavailable. Requiring the commission to phase out gas without requiring a capacity standard for replacement is dangerous and will put lives in jeopardy. Moreover, there are millions of households which depend on gas for their furnaces, their water heaters and their stoves and ovens. If gas service is cut off or if existing infrastructure is not repaired and kept in service, who will pay for the transition to other sources of power for these homes and apartments?

There are no protections for the utility workers losing their jobs because of this transition. While we applaud the legislature for attempting to provide relief for low-income earners, the legislature fails address the thousands of good paying jobs with pensions and benefits, that will be lost because of this legislation.

In conclusion, while we support the state's commitment to renewable energy solutions, we believe, in its current form, this bill jeopardizes the livelihoods of union utility workers, compromises safety standards, and risks the reliability of utility services. We urge you to reconsider these provisions and engage in a collaborative dialogue with union representatives to ensure that any legislation enacted benefits both the environment and the workers who serve our communities. For additional information contact Glen Casey, Legislative Representative at (518) 331-8837.