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MEDIA ALERT:

DOZENS OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS WHO OPERATE HOME HEATING OIL COMPANIES WILL TESTIFY TONIGHT AGAINST GOVERNOR MALLOY'S NEW ENERGY PLAN DURING THE FIRST PUBLIC HEARING IN BRIDGEPORT!

"The Governor is putting all his eggs in one basket and unless he has a crystal ball, Connecticut residents could end up with a basket of broken eggs."

~Gene Guilford, President of Independent Connecticut Petroleum Association.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

WHERE: BRIDGEPORT CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

WHEN: NOVEMBER 14TH, 6 P.M.

Fired-up, dozens of small business owners who operate home heating oil companies, renewable fuel advocates, HVAC companies, propane companies and others representing hundreds of thousand of consumers, will take a stand tonight against Governor Dannel Malloy's 6.8 billion dollar new energy plan which includes converting up to 300,000 homes in Connecticut to natural gas and building 900 miles of new pipelines across the state.

"The entire foundation of the plan is the mistaken assumption that natural gas prices will stay the way they are today and last for a long, long time," said Gene Guilford, President of the cromwell-based Independent Connecticut Petroleum Association or ICPA said. "The Governor is putting all his eggs in one basket and unless he has a crystal ball, Connecticut residents could end up with a basket of broken eggs. The state energy plan puts consumers in jeopardy by making assumptions about the future that no one can know."

ICPA and its members equate the state's 6.8 billion dollar plan to what happened in the 1950s and say it's just another example of why Government should not be influencing consumers on how to heat their homes.

"The Government and Utilities in the 50s told us that electricity would be too cheap to meter. That led to the all-electric homes of the 60s and 70s and we learned later what a mistake that was as consumers couldn't afford to pay their electric bills as rates skyrocketed," Guilford said. "The Connecticut energy plan does the same thing all over again, this time, with

natural gas. Taxpayers should not be footing the bill for this. Utilities and its share-holders should bear the economic risk.”

Further, ICPA and others are opposed to any state government investment in expanding the natural gas company monopoly. Guilford says that the Governor’s plan will give consumers fewer choices by limiting the market and locking consumers into an uncertain future. Because natural gas is only sold by one company, if prices rise, consumers will have nowhere to turn. With home heating oil, consumers have 600 companies to choose from every day. While natural gas is less expensive than oil currently, for most of the last thirty years, heating oil was lower than natural gas.

“We don’t have a problem competing against natural gas,” said Guilford. “We just don’t think we should have to compete against both the state and the natural gas companies. Plus, the state energy plan is banking our future with the same utility companies who couldn’t keep the lights on during recent storms. The State, whose job it is to regulate these utilities, is now turning into the utilities’ biggest cheerleader.”

Note: ICPA members and Vice-President Chris Herb will be available for interviews. If you are under deadline and need someone before the public hearing starts, please give me a call and we will make it happen.

ICPA Bullet Points:

***ICPA represent 600 heating oil and propane retailers and their Connecticut- Based 13,000 employees.** Together, they serve 650,000 consumers every single day. For most of the last thirty years heating oil has been less expensive than natural gas and at no time did heating oil retailers ask the state to convert natural gas customers to heating oil - so ICPA does not believe simply due to a short-term advantage natural gas has that the state should be putting its thumb on the scale of consumer's choices."

***Connecticut needs an energy policy that is balanced, responsible and market-driven, not one focused only on natural gas and without the influence of Government."**

*** "We disagree with the state's contention that Connecticut should be more like New York or Massachusetts. In Connecticut, consumers made the choice to heat with oil because for most of the last thirty years oil has been the best heating value. We earned our customers through competition, not through an action of government."**

*** "The engine of economic development for Connecticut will have to look beyond just natural gas as about the same prices for natural gas exist everywhere in the nation. Every major metropolitan area in our state is already served by natural gas."**

***The Expansion of Natural Gas use in Connecticut worsens the already overly-reliant position of the State with respect to Natural Gas.** Connecticut should avoid a “One-Fuel Fits All” energy strategy. Both ISO-New England and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission have warned this year about New England’s over-reliance on natural gas and Connecticut should heed these warnings.

***All utility expansions should be strictly financed by utility ratepayers** and shareholders – never on the backs of taxpayers. Any economic risk the utilities refuse to bear on their own should not be borne by the taxpayers.

***Natural gas is not clean.** The principle component of natural gas is methane. Methane (CH₄) is a greenhouse gas that remains in the atmosphere for approximately 9-15 years. Methane is over 20 times more powerful in trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide (CO₂) over a 100-year period. This leaking methane contributes more to climate change than does the emission of carbon dioxide, contributes global warming and to the killing of trees and other vegetation and is posing a health and safety hazard to human beings in the areas where the leaks occur.

***State government should stay out of the business of picking winners and losers in the energy markets** because [a] it has a poor track record of success and [b] consumers in a free market make decisions about what they want to buy and from whom and it is not government's role to take the place of consumers.

***Connecticut has among the top 5 most expensive gasoline and diesel fuel costs in the nation** and this is entirely attributable to the fact that Connecticut levies the highest gasoline and diesel excise taxes in the nation. Lowering our cost of living can be achieved by lowering state gasoline and diesel taxes."

(For a more detailed view of ICPA's reaction the Governor Malloy's energy plan, click on the link below.)

<http://icpact.wordpress.com/2012/10/05/connecticut-needs-an-energy-policy-that-is-balanced-responsible-and-market-driven-not-one-focused-only-on-natural-gas/>