



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

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*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

March 7, 2017

To: Senators Formica and Winfield, and Representative Reed, Co-Chairs
Representative Hoydick, Ranking Member
Members of the Energy & Technology Committee

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: **Support SB 973, AAC A Residential Sustainable Energy Program**

The HBRA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with about eight hundred (800) member firms statewide employing tens of thousands of CT's citizens. Our members, all small businesses, are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry and to consumers. We build between 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in the state each year and engage in countless home remodeling projects.

The HBRA of Connecticut supports SB 973. We have two language recommendations (see end of this testimony). The bill would build upon the Connecticut Green Bank's successful Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program for commercial property owners by establishing a similar PACE program for the state's residential property owners.

The commercial program is already working in over 100 municipalities in Connecticut and a residential program could dramatically expand access to energy efficiency, clean energy and water conservation upgrades for the state's homeowners. This expansion of PACE financing would foster demand for construction and home improvement services across our state where nearly sixty percent of the housing stock was built prior to 1970, according to the Census Bureau. SB 973 would be a much needed and potentially significant boost to our industry and the state's economy.

Importantly, SB 973 contains an important provision to ensure that homeowners receive high quality service when utilizing the proposed PACE program. It would require that any contractor installing qualified improvements hold a valid license from the Dept. of Consumer Protection (DCP). This provision protects homeowners against untrained and unlicensed contractors.

SB 973 would make Connecticut the fourth state in the nation to make PACE available to homeowners, following bipartisan actions in California, Florida and Missouri. Within the last decade, more than 130,000 homeowners in these states have utilized over \$3.4 billion to improve their homes, while creating over 20,000 good paying jobs. With this legislation, you will create the opportunity to keep Connecticut at the forefront of efforts to create more jobs and better, more efficient homes.

Vision: "Building CT's Economy, Communities and Better Lives One Home at a Time"
Mission: "Using Effective Advocacy and New Knowledge to Solve Our Member's Problems"

We recommend the following language changes to SB 973 (LCO 4614):

At line 113, delete “or local” because Connecticut has a statewide, mandatory State Building Code that cannot be modified or varied at the local level.

At line 246, after “license” insert “or registration that is required by law to perform such qualified improvements” because home improvement contractors are registered by DCP and depending on the qualified improvements to be installed in a home may not need any additional specialized license.

With these recommended minor changes, please support SB 973. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation.