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Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee,

My name is Barry Hobbins and I am the Public Advocate with the Office of the Public Advocate. For the reasons described in this testimony the OPA urges the Committee to vote LD 508 "Ought to Pass."

This bill is identical to a bill passed out of committee last session, but which never reached a vote of the full legislature due to limitations arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. As those of you who were on the committee last session will recall, the bill originally introduced by the OPA last session was far more ambitious than that ultimately passed out of committee. Through compromises with other interested parties, including competitive energy suppliers, the final form of the bill adopted by the committee addressed only a single issue – the jurisdiction of the PUC over independent door-to-door sales contractors used by competitive energy providers to market the service offered by those providers. The bill grants the PUC the authority to investigate claims against these third-party contractors and to impose civil penalties for violations of the consumer protection rules enacted by the Legislature by statute and the PUC by rule.

Given the extensive effort by all parties that went into negotiating the final language

of the bill last session, the OPA is hopeful that this proposal can be approved again through this bill swiftly and without controversy.

Wherefore, the OPA urges the Committee to vote LD 508 "Ought to Pass" to provide electricity customers of greater protection from anticompetitive and predatory marketing practices by contractors engaged in door-to-door sales on behalf of competitive energy providers.

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 487, and will be present at the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,



Barry J. Hobbins  
Public Advocate