



Dear Co-Chairs Rep. Garibay, Sen. Hochadel, Ranking Members Rep. Bolinsky, Sen. Hwang, Vice-Chairs Rep. Fortier and Sen. Miller, and Honorable Members of the Aging Committee:

Operation Fuel d/b/a Generation Power CT Supports House Bill No. 5140, *An Act Concerning a Study of the Needs of Senior Citizens*

Operation Fuel d/b/a Generation Power CT (GPCT) is a 501(c)3 private nonprofit founded in 1977 during the oil embargo, when energy price shocks destabilized household budgets and the national economy. Today, we continue to provide emergency energy and utility assistance to eligible Connecticut households experiencing financial crisis. We provide direct bill assistance for qualifying Connecticut residents who earn up to 75% of State Median Income (SMI). Each program season offers struggling Connecticut households a one-time assistance grant up to \$500 towards a utility bill or one-time fuel delivery. More information can be found at <https://gpct.org/gethelp/>. For thousands of households, **GPCT is the last option in an emergency.**

GPCT supports¹ H.B. 5140, which would require the Executive Director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity and the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services to study the needs of senior citizens regarding: long-term care, transportation, housing assistance, nutritional assistance and opportunities for socialization. The bill would require a report to the legislature regarding the findings of the study. (Section 1). One area we suggest that the study examine is energy affordability, and how programs such as Generation Power CT and the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), can help senior citizens pay their energy bills.

As Connecticut’s emergency energy assistance fund, Generation Power CT sees every day how our state’s affordability crisis impacts senior citizens in our state – many of whom are on fixed incomes. In Fiscal Year 2025, 30% of our approved households had at least one household member at or over the age of 65. Here are a few quotes from just a few of our neighbors struggling with affordability:

- “My parents were married for 60 years and my father keeps the electric bill in my mother’s name; we still like seeing her name every month. Thanks so much for your help. It’s been so hard since [my mother’s] death and as an unpaid caregiver for my elderly father, it’s been a struggle to keep him home and not in a facility. Your help is a lifesaver.”
- “My mother lives on a fixed income in an old home she moved into in 2024. The cold weather and condition of the house resulted in high heating costs that resulted in a major financial hardship. The \$500 grant she was approved for brought her to tears. These funds will ensure oil delivery for another month while she works on paying down the balance she accrued during the bitterly cold winter. We are very grateful for this program. The challenges of a major relocation,

¹https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=HB05140&which_year=2026



hard winter, health issues and limited funds have been very hard on my 82-year-old mother, and this grant was a welcome and valuable resource.”

- “Ever so grateful for [Generation Power CT] Assistance. As a single senior citizen with significant health issues, life is "paycheck to paycheck" making normality not so normal: it seems I've been dressed in 3+ layers all winter (mittens and a goober hat in bed included) trying to conserve on fuel usage for maintaining the house heat in the low 60's. As well, using outside water to flush toilets to minimize high electric use that comes with electric water pump use. Skipping or not purchasing important medications is a fact of life now with exorbitant copays. Skipping important follow-up diagnostic tests is on the same basis. With only half of my original teeth left, the Dentist is out of the question making for difficult times eating anything and putting me at risk for choking on food. Can't drive or go anywhere, so I stay home all the time - the last real vacation was 30 years ago with our honeymoon. Paradise has been sitting in the sun on my porch garnering as much Vitamin D as I can, as well as looking after my best friends - 2 small dogs. Too much to go over here.... Ever so grateful for the assistance given by the Fuel Bank Operation and my Faith in God. Thank you folks so much!!!

Medical challenges, job loss, and other life events strike when least expected. Simply put: *when people are in an emergency situation, they need somewhere to go.*

As an organization who receives more requests for assistance than our current funding allows, we see firsthand how our state’s affordability challenges impact the most vulnerable residents in our state. In January 2026, GPCT received requests for assistance from 1,822 households – in just 11 days. This demand represents the most applications received in the shortest period of time, since our founding in 1977.

GPCT supports this study to identify the needs and mechanisms to ensure programs deliver essential services to our state’s senior citizens. If there is any opportunity for us to share our clients’ experiences, stories, program data, or otherwise contribute, we are stand ready to support however we can.

Thank you for your consideration of our written comments.

Sincerely,

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