Testimony of
James Collura, President and CEO
National Energy & Fuels Institute, Inc.
U.S. EPA Clean Water Act Section 401 Listening Session
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Good afternoon. I am Jim Collura, President and CEO of the National Energy & Fuels Institute or "NEFI." We represent what is commonly referred to as the home heating oil industry, which provides safe, reliable, and affordable warmth and comfort to five million American homes and businesses, primarily located in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states.

We are closely monitoring the debate over Section 401 and evaluating its impact on our industry, especially its role in preventing or delaying the buildout of new natural gas pipelines in New York and New England. With respect to this matter, there is a recurring misconception used to justify these projects and the broader need for Section 401 reforms –that more natural gas is needed to displace quote-unquote "dirty" home heating oil in the Northeast. Respectfully, this view is outdated and misleading.

Today, our fuel is cleaner and more efficient than ever. Our mostly small multigenerational family businesses are delivering ultra-low sulfur heating oil blended with American-made biodiesel and renewable diesel. As a result, heating oil now burns as clean or cleaner than natural gas – dramatically reducing emissions without compromising reliability or affordability. And modern heating systems designed for these fuels can deliver up to 25% in fuel savings, allowing homeowners to lower emissions without the cost of complete system replacements. This isn't a future promise. It's happening now.

Our fuel supports U.S. farmers, creates good-paying jobs, and strengthens rural economies. In fact, our industry helps to ensure year-round demand for American biofuels. When transportation-related use of biofuels drops in winter, our demand peaks – creating stable markets that keep biofuel producers and feedstock growers viable all year long.

NEFI members are Main Street businesses deeply embedded in their communities. Some are so trusted, they literally hold keys to their customers' homes. They employ tens of thousands of good paying American jobs including heating fuel delivery drivers and service technicians, who show up in the worst weather conditions and are always ready to respond to a "no heat" call, whether it be the night, weekend, or even Christmas or New Years Eve.

To be clear, we do not oppose natural gas or the proposed Section 401 reforms. We recognize the need for a diverse energy mix – especially in the energy-constrained Northeast – as unprecedented growth due to data centers, artificial intelligence, and onshoring manufacturing drive up electricity demand. Home heating oil can and should be part of that mix. We urge support for a level playing field that allows all fuels and technologies to compete on their merits—and ensures consumers have access to the energy that is right for their families.

As the discussion of Section 401 moves forward and its role in Northeast pipeline expansion is reevaluated, we ask that the administration consider the facts about today's heating oil: clean, renewable, and delivered by trusted local businesses. We're not asking for special treatment – just accurate representation in these critical policy discussions. We look forward to working with the EPA and the broader administration to ensure Americans have access to safe, reliable, and affordable energy. Thank you.