

**Written testimony of Susan Eastwood
CGA Energy and Technology Committee
March 5, 2020**

In support of SB 10, HB 5350, HB 5348, HB 5351, HB 5008

Dear Energy & Technology Committee Chairs Needleman and Arconti, Vice-Chairs Lesser and Allie-Brennan, Ranking Members Formica and Ferraro, and distinguished members of the Committee,

My name is Susan Eastwood. I am a resident of Ashford and am founder and Chair of the Ashford Clean Energy Task Force, a leader in the CT Energy Network and a member of the Sierra Club Executive Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of several raised bills before the Committee. These bills all contribute to Connecticut's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect our environment and the health of our citizens. These efforts will help Connecticut to meet the mandate of the state's Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA). The GWSA requires a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 45% below 2001 level by 2030 and 80% by 2050.

S.B. No. 10, AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE. – SUPPORT

The Governor is to be commended for his leadership on climate change. Setting ambitious goals also requires the political will to get it done. I urge the legislature to act on these recommendations without delay and to make our government accountable for their success. Please consider adding 100% carbon-free goals for the transportation and building sectors as well.

H.B. No. 5350, AN ACT CONCERNING NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE. – SUPPORT

This bill would remove the authority of utilities to impose a tax on ratepayers for the purpose of building gas pipelines. Passage of the bill also addresses the need for utilities to repair existing pipelines that continue to leak methane gas, the most damaging of all greenhouse gas emissions. These are two ways to disincentivize new gas infrastructure and save ratepayers money. It would also protect the wages of workers replacing gas infrastructure, and help keep rates under control.

Taxpayers should not have to pay for any more gas infrastructure. Natural gas is no bridge fuel, it is a "bridge to nowhere". Connecticut has set strong goals for a clean, efficient energy future, but we need action to be able to meet those goals. This is not a feel good exercise, the future of our children and grandchildren and of our planet is at stake.

Connecticut doesn't need this additional energy from natural gas, we have planned for a clean renewable future with offshore wind coming online soon. Additional gas power plants and pipelines are intended to support regional New England energy needs but may well be unnecessary given the growth of renewables. The fossil fuel industry is proposing new pipelines and power plants, like the Killingly Energy Center, which will keep us dependent on dirty fracked gas for decades and make it difficult to achieve our greenhouse gas reduction goals. Why should Connecticut rate payers pay for this? Instead, let's invest in clean energy, grow good jobs, and improve our health and environment.

I urge you to support HB 5350 to prohibit Connecticut consumers from being forced to pay for expensive and unnecessary gas infrastructure.

H.B. No. 5348, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STUDY OF COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION. – SUPPORT

As Chair of our local Clean Energy Task Force, I have seen too many people who would like to benefit from solar pv be disappointed when their roof is too shady, old, or oriented inappropriately. And renters have even less control. In fact, 80% of Connecticut residential and commercial roofs are not suitable for solar panels. This is why Community Choice Aggregation is essential to building strong renewable energy options which will be available to all Connecticut residents and business owners. California and Massachusetts have shown how successful this program can be. We should move quickly to make CCA available in Connecticut. I urge the Committee to speed up the process to make it available before two years as currently in the bill language.

H.B. No. 5351, AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN PROGRAMS AND TO INCENTIVIZE AND IMPLEMENT ELECTRIC ENERGY STORAGE RESOURCES. - SUPPORT

HB 5351 would encourage the deployment of one thousand megawatts of energy storage in Connecticut by the end of 2030. Rapid development of storage capacity for renewables is crucial for efficient use of renewable energy on the grid in those times when the sun doesn't shine, or the wind doesn't blow.

H.B. No. 5008, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTARY ADOPTION BY MUNICIPALITIES. – SUPPORT

As a member of Ashford's Planning and Zoning Commission, I advocated for this concept several years ago. It's about time we allowed municipalities to go above and beyond on green building standards.

Thank you for your attention and for your ongoing work on these important issues.

Sincerely,

Susan Eastwood
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CT Energy Network
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