



Audubon | CONNECTICUT

Energy & Technology Committee
Public Hearing of March 5, 2020

Senate Bill No. 10 (Governor's Bill) – AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the National Audubon Society through its affiliate state office, Audubon Connecticut. The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, throughout the Americas using science, bipartisan advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation. Our conservation network extends statewide and includes nearly 30,000 members, five Connecticut chapters, and many partners along the [Atlantic Flyway](#).

Through our conservation programs focused on Coasts, Community Conservation, Healthy Forests, and Climate, we are working to preserve habitat and protect bird species that are of state, national, and global concern—like the Piping Plover, Wood Thrush, and Marsh Sparrow. It begins with birds, but our mission connects people to a much wider range of issues such as building a more resilient Long Island Sound, restoring a healthier, natural balance to urban places by bringing back green habitats, managing our forests and wetlands to sequester carbon, reducing pesticide use, and promoting land conservation. Our goal is to reduce the impact of global climate change on birds, wildlife, and people.

Senate Bill No. 10 (Section 2):

Today, we are asking that the Energy and Technology Committee re-examine certain language in Section 2 of the Governor's Bill (Lines 42-43):

Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 22a-200a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2020*):

(a) The state shall reduce the level of emissions of greenhouse gas:

(1) Not later than January 1, 2020, to a level at least ten per cent below the level emitted in 1990;

(2) Not later than January 1, 2030, to a level at least forty-five per cent below the level emitted in 2001; **[and]**

(3) Not later than January 1, 2040, to a level of zero per cent from electric generation serving electric usage in the state;

[(3)] (4) Not later than January 1, 2050, to a level at least eighty per cent below the level emitted in 2001; **[.] and**

[(4)] (5) All of the levels referenced in this subsection shall be determined by the

Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection.

This language proposed to amend Public Act 04-252 AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE and Public Act 08-98 AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT GLOBAL WARMING SOLUTIONS. Both of these landmark laws identify reduction targets for greenhouse gases in Connecticut.

Senate Bill no. 10 now specifically identifies an emission level of “zero percent from electric generation serving electric usage in the state” by January 1, 2040. We appreciate the urgency of the climate change issue and the need to prevent any increase in global temperatures. In fact, we draw your attention to you the National Audubon Society’s latest report, [Survival by Degrees.](#)

According to this report:

Of the 588 North American bird species Audubon studied, more than half are likely to be in trouble. Audubon’s models indicate that 314 species will lose more than 50 percent of their current climatic range by 2080.

Of the 314 species at risk from global warming, 126 of them are classified as climate endangered. These birds are projected to lose more than 50 percent of their current range by 2050. The other 188 species are classified as climate threatened and expected to lose more than 50 percent of their current range by 2080 if global warming continues at its current pace.

We also draw your attention to a bill passed last year entitled AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY DERIVED FROM OFFSHORE WIND (Public Act 19-71). This law significant because it includes a very important provision in Section (1)(a)(4) of the law:

...the commissioner shall establish a commission on environmental standards to provide input on best practices for **avoiding, minimizing and mitigating** any impacts to wildlife, natural resources, ecosystems and traditional or existing water-dependent uses, including, but not limited to, commercial fishing, during the construction and operation of facilities eligible pursuant to this section. (Emphasis added.)

We believe that all electric generation should be properly sited and selected consistent with environmental standards that avoid, minimize and mitigate any impacts to “wildlife, natural resources, and ecosystems.” It is laudable to establish a zero emission target for electric generation, but are we willing to establish such a standard in law without consideration of potential deleterious environmental impacts on our beloved natural spaces that such a “zero emission on electric generation serving electric usage in the state” may create?

We believe we are intelligent enough to do much better than setting an aspiration standard in law that does not consider the consequences to “wildlife, natural resources, and ecosystems” of such a standard.

Thus, we ask that you amend the language of Senate Bill No. 10 as follows (Lines 42 - 43):

(3) Not later than January 1, 2040, to a level of zero per cent from electric generation serving electric usage in the state provided any electric generation that comes on line after October 1, 2020 shall, to the greatest extent practicable, avoid, minimize and mitigate any impacts to wildlife, natural resources, and ecosystems;

Senate Bill No. 10 (Section 3):

We strongly support section 3 of Senate Bill No. 10 that proposes to provide procurement authority to the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection for up to 300,000 megawatt hours of energy storage, demand response, and energy efficiency. Demand response and energy efficiency are some of the most cost effective and least environmentally damaging of the greenhouse gas reduction strategies. Strategies that seek to avoid the emission of greenhouse gases to the environment are critically important to achieving our overall emissions targets.

Innovation in the area of energy storage is also essential as it will help improve the electric grid reliability of solar and wind resources when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining.

We invite you to take a look at our '[Birds & Climate Visualizer](#)' (this is the main landing page - scroll down to find the visualizer) - which allows the user to query by zip code to see which impacts from climate change are predicted for your area, and how birds near you will be affected.

In closing, the National Audubon Society relies upon the enormous generosity of our members and donors to keep our mission going. As a 501(c) not for profit entity the National Audubon Society manages many properties in Connecticut. We make these properties available to the public so that both residents and visitors alike can enjoy birds and an open space experience. These are Connecticut eco-tourism experiences where we provide natural resource and conservation education. The link below provides additional information about our centers, sanctuaries, properties and programs. <http://ct.audubon.org/about-us/centers-sanctuaries-and-chapters>.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. Should you have any questions, please contact Robert LaFrance, Director of Policy, Audubon Connecticut, National Audubon Society, at Robert.LaFrance@Audubon.org (Phone 203.405.0655)