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**Testimony of David Sutherland – Director of Government Relations
Before the Energy & Technology Committee – March 5th, 2020
In Support of Proposed SB 10
AAC CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE**

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, I would like to express our strong support for SB 10, AAC CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE. Connecticut has made important progress, thanks in part to this committee, in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our electricity supply, but evidence continues to mount that human society, at all levels, must take drastic action to reduce the vast majority of our emissions from all sectors over the next two decades.

It has been argued that anything Connecticut by itself does to reduce emissions will have little global impact, and is therefore not worth doing. As with many societal challenges; if every political jurisdiction acts in accordance with that attitude, the result will be tragedy of the commons writ very large, with no hope to avert catastrophic impacts.

Climate change, perhaps more than any other challenge our species has faced, is caused and plays out on a truly global scale; and so makes it all the more tempting to dismiss the impact of any local action. Yet the dire threat climate change presents demands action and leadership from every state and nation. Just because others are not taking action now does not relieve any one political entity, including our state, from a moral imperative to lead with our actions.

On a national level, there have been many occasions when states have had to take the lead in addressing critical issues when Congress has refused to act. Connecticut, in 1813, was the first state to pass laws regarding child labor. Other states expanded on Connecticut's provisions, and though it took many years, Congress finally passed child labor laws. Kentucky and Wyoming were the first states to allow women to vote. Other states extended the vote to women, and eventually Congress, on its second try, sent the 19th amendment to the states for ratification. The actions that states took, on these and other controversial issues, were feared in their time by many who said they would ruin the economy and society, but these laws are now foundational to a just and responsible society.

Short of nuclear war, climate change presents the most comprehensive and dire threat we face to life on this planet. Many, if not most, of the problems our country and others are facing – new diseases, agricultural pests, water shortages, economic inequities, refugee migration, wildfires, intense storms, and many others - will be exacerbated by climate change.

Some other states are now ahead of Connecticut in adopting the types of goals mandated in SB 10. We can and must join our colleague states and boldly address one of the most critical threats facing not only our economy and our state, but literally our species.