

Testimony of the Connecticut Audubon Society to the Commerce Committee
of the Connecticut General Assembly in support of
**H.B. No. 6119 AN ACT CONCERNING ARTS,
CULTURE AND TOURISM FUNDING.**

February 11, 2021



The Connecticut Audubon Society thanks the Committee and the sponsors of **H.B. No. 6119 An Act Concerning Arts, Culture and Tourism Funding** for proposing this important resolution and for the opportunity to express our strong support.

The Connecticut Audubon Society strongly supports the Commerce Committee's passage of this important resolution. Tourism is a critical part of Connecticut's economy. The State of Connecticut estimates that tourism accounts for "\$15.5 billion in business sales supported by traveler spending annually, \$2.2 billion in tax revenues, including \$960 million in state/local taxes and 84,254 jobs directly supported by tourism (total of 123,500 both direct/indirect jobs.)" https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Tourism/04_Research-and-Stats/Economic-Impact-of-Tourism#:~:text=Conducted%20by%20Tourism%20Economics%2C%20one,in%20state%2Flocal%20taxes

Green tourism is an important and growing sector of tourism. The Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) released a Study conducted by UConn's Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA) in 2011 showing that outdoor activities on state lands alone have an economic benefit of more than \$1 billion a year and 9,000 jobs. The study also documented that for every dollar the state spends on the state park system, it receives a return of \$38 in economic activity. <https://www.ctwoodlands.org/sites/default/files//2011%20Economic%20Impact%20Study.pdf> This is only a small percentage of the economic value of our beautiful state's natural recreational resources since it only considers the impact of state lands and does not take into account municipal, private or NGO owned properties.

A 2011 study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that wildlife watching alone accounts for nearly \$1B in annual revenues in Connecticut. <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/fhw11-ct.pdf>

The Connecticut Audubon Society stands ready to partner in promoting the rich inventory of natural resources that our amazing state has to offer and strongly requests that you support H.B. No. 6119.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick M. Comins, Executive Director

Founded in 1898, the Connecticut Audubon Society is an independent organization that conserves Connecticut's environment through science-based education and advocacy focused on the state's bird populations and habitats. We own and manage 20 preserves covering almost 3,300 acres in all areas of the state, and we work with landowners to help them manage their land for the benefit of birds and other wildlife.