

Written testimony regarding Raised H.B. 6551, An Act Concerning Environmental Air Quality

Dear Co-chairs Cohen and Gresko, Vice-chairs Slap and Palm, Ranking Members Miner and Harding, and Members of the Environment Committee:

I write in support of Raised H.B. 6551, An Act Concerning Environmental Air Quality.

This bill aligns with important principles set out by the Governor's Council on Climate Change's (GC3) Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group around procedural, contextual, and distributive equity in the *GC3 Phase 1 Report*.ⁱ

Procedural Equity: Planning in partnership with low-income communities and BIPOC communities.

Contextual Equity: Assessing the vulnerabilities of communities across Connecticut to climate change, due to the legacy of racial and income inequality and other factors.

Distributive Equity: Placing the most vulnerable communities at the forefront of any potential benefits a policy might create; ensuring that the distribution of the benefits and burdens of climate change mitigation and adaptation are equitably distributed.

The bill supports *procedural* equity by creating an environmental equity working group with membership from communities of color, low-income communities and communities bearing disproportionate pollution and climate change burdens. It supports *contextual* equity by calling for the development of criteria to assess community vulnerability to cumulative environmental burdens, climate change impacts, and structural factors including those caused by historical discrimination. Finally, it supports distributive equity in two important ways. First, it sets out a process to apply the working group's criteria toward identification of disadvantaged communities for the purpose of co-pollutant reductions, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, regulatory impact statements and the allocation of investments. Second, the bill strengthens the state's Environmental Justice Law by enabling disapproval of facility and permit applications when determinations of adverse environmental or public health effects are made.

Together, these provisions provide important mechanisms to address Connecticut's inequitable distribution of environmental burdens and associated health outcomes.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Respectfully,

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ⁱ Governor's Council on Climate Change. *Taking Action on Climate Change and Building a More Resilient Connecticut for All, Phase 1 Report: Near-Term Actions*. 2021; online at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3_Phase1_Report_Jan2021.pdf. Page 27.