



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Environment Committee

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House Bill 6551, An Act Concerning Environmental Air Quality

The Department of Public Health (DPH) supports the intent of House Bill 6551 and thanks the committee for the opportunity to testify. Environmental health factors are directly associated with health equity, and legislation that pursues health equity is encouraged and supported by the Department. Ameliorating health disparities and promoting health equity has been a primary goal of DPH for many years.

Section 1 of the bill requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to establish an environmental equity working group, in consultation with DPH and the Department of Labor, to identify disadvantaged communities that could benefit from greenhouse gas reduction. DPH would be required to have two representatives serve on this working group as appointed by the commissioner of public health.

The environmental equity working group would be tasked with identifying communities with higher rates of disease associated with environmental and social factors. DPH is positioned to provide health data and other metrics to assist in the determination of disadvantaged community designations. Such designations would help keep pollution out of disadvantaged communities. Reducing pollution in communities can lead to better health outcomes and reduced rates of diseases.

Section 2 of the bill amends the environmental justice statute to enable disapproval of facility and permit applications when certain determinations concerning adverse environmental or public health effects are made.

Thank you for your consideration of this information. DPH encourages committee members to reach out with any questions.

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