

I write to submit testimony IN SUPPORT of HB 6551. This legislation would establish an environmental equity working group composed of community members from communities bearing disproportionate pollution and climate change burdens. This working group, along with the Department of Public Health, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Labor Department will work toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions and co-pollutants in those communities. HB 6551 would help prevent further environmental harm to these communities due poor air quality and other environmental degradation. Connecticut has some of the worst polluted cities for smog and ozone air pollution levels. When inhaled, ozone damages the lungs and compromises the ability of the body to fight respiratory infections. Asthma, for instance, is the single most avoidable cause of hospitalization, and yet Connecticut incurred \$102 million acute care charges due to asthma in 2018. Residents from Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, and Waterbury account for 18% of Connecticut's total population but account for 44% of the \$102 million of those asthma acute care charges. Connecticut must do this to address climate change and meet our state's greenhouse gas reduction mandate under the Global Warming Solutions Act.

I urge the committee to SUPPORT HB 6551 to ensure that Connecticut receives clean, non-polluting energy that protects the public health of our most vulnerable populations, as well as meaningful reduction of the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank you for your work,

Royal Graves

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