

Dear Environment Committee member,

I am writing to voice my support for three bills: HB 6551, SB 884, and HB 6441, and to lend my voice to advance a future that prioritizes climate justice, mitigation, and adaptation.

HB 6551 (1) establishes a working group that will identify disadvantaged communities for purposes of greenhouse gas reduction activities and investments and (2) 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.

Though these measures are important, I urge the Committee to incorporate the following additional provisions into the bill to support sound environmental and public health protections in our communities. These provisions include (1) aligning state agency decision-making with the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), (2) requiring community involvement in negotiations of Community Environmental Benefit Agreements, (3) providing for citizen enforcement of the GWSA and Environmental Justice law pursuant to the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act, (4) expanding the definition of “environmental justice communities” and “affecting facilities,” and (5) establishing fees for certain permit applications to cover the costs to provide environmental justice programs or technical assistance to applicants and overburdened communities.

S.B. No. 884 is Connecticut’s authorizing legislation that lays the foundation for implementing the Transportation and Climate Initiative by (1) adopting a declining cap on greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, (2) establishing the carbon allowance and auction mechanism; and (3) authorizing DEEP to carry out the necessary functions to further the purposes of such program.

HB 6441 supports climate resiliency in communities. The Governor’s adaptation bill (1) allows municipalities selected by the DEEP Commissioner to participate in a pilot program where said municipalities can collect fees from entities using the stormwater system to have directed funds for managing the system; (2) allows municipalities to generate revenue for open space for the public and wildlife to enjoy; (3) allows towns to create adaptation and resiliency and erosion control boards to track, manage, operate, and report on local efforts and infrastructure employed to adapt to climate change; (4) gives municipalities more options to invest for future resiliency needs; and (5) creates a place for federal or other funds to be deposited for resiliency and adaptation projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment in support of a well-protected climate future.

Sincerely,

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