

Rev. Nancy Leckerling
19 Grove Avenue
Madison, CT 06443

March 6, 2021

Re: HB 6441, HB 6551 and SB 884

Dear Senator Cohen, Representative Borer and members of the Environment Committee,

I write to ask that you please support three bills at the public hearing Monday: HB 6441, HB 6551 and SB 884, as I am concerned about a future in Connecticut that prioritizes climate justice, mitigation and adaptation. I would like to see **HB 6441** passed into law to provide municipalities with tools to fund climate adaptation and resilience projects, following the recommendations of Governor Lamont's Council on Climate Change. I especially support Section 3 of this bill which provides municipalities with an option to establish a buyer's conveyance fee to fund land stewardship, climate resilience and other environmental projects in my town of Madison. This costs the State of CT nothing and could be a catalyst to foster less overdevelopment near coastal neighborhoods and to initiate needed resilience projects in our town. Please support HB 6441 and give Madison the opportunity to decide whether to establish this sensible funding program.

HB 6551 is a very important bill to achieve some environmental justice in underserved communities in our state, communities affected by pollution and burdened with disease from breathing particulate matter and toxic emissions. The bill is needed because it would establish a working group that will **IDENTIFY** disadvantaged communities for purposes of greenhouse gas reduction activities and investments and it would amend 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 measure are important, I urge your Environment Committee to incorporate the following **additional** provisions into the bill to strengthen it and to support sound environmental and public health protections in our communities: 1) align state agency decision-making with the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA); 2) require community involvement in negotiations of Community Environmental Benefit Agreements; 3) provide for citizen enforcement of the GWSA and Environmental Justice law pursuant to the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act; 4) expand the definition of "environmental justice communities" and "affecting facilities"; and 5) establish fees for certain permit applications to cover the costs of providing environmental justice programs or technical assistance to applicants and overburdened (by pollution) communities.

SB 884 is an important bill to cap and reduce emissions from transportation, the biggest polluter in our state and lays the foundation for implementing the much-needed Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI) which will also establish the carbon allowance and auction mechanism and authorize DEEP to carry out the necessary functions to further the purposes of the TCI, which builds on the regional model that's already reducing emissions from the electricity sector. The TCI provides for significant investment in underserved communities and establishes an equity advisory board to ensure investments have the most meaningful impact possible. This bill will mitigate climate change, directly improve air quality in

CT, especially in the most overburdened neighborhoods close to highways, where the rate of asthma and other particulate-related diseases is alarming!

Thank you for reading, for the chance to submit public comment in support of a well-protected climate future for Connecticut, and for all that you do toward the latter end.

Sincerely,

Rev. Nancy Leckerling

Co-Chair

First Congregational Church, Guilford

Environmental Ministry Team