

Dear Co-Chairs Christine Cohen and Joseph Gresko, Vice-Chairs Christine Palm and Derek Slap, Ranking Members Craig Miner and Stephen Harding, and Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Anna Word, and I am a resident of New Haven. I am writing this statement to show my **strong support for HB 6551**, An Act Concerning Environmental Air Quality. This bill would 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.

I am a biomedical scientist who has dedicated her life and career to improving the health of the people in my community, and my support for HB 6551 stems from that commitment. Climate change is intimately entwined with our health in many ways, one of the most obvious of those being in the quality of the air we breathe.

According to the American Lung Association's "State of the Air 2019," Connecticut ranked 10th as the worst polluted with smog and given "F ratings" for ozone air pollution levels. When inhaled, ozone damages the lungs and compromises the ability of the body to fight respiratory infections. This in particular is a great danger to the health of Connecticut residents as we continue to experience escalating community spread COVID-19. As climate change is likely to increase the prevalence of infectious diseases and the instances of pandemics, this danger will likely only increase with the warming of our planet.

Additionally, low-income and communities of color in Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven, Stamford, and Bridgeport are disproportionately affected by climate change, pollution, and other environmental threats. These communities also face the greatest barriers to proper medical care, both historically and currently. Therefore, it is vitally important that people from these communities be part of the decision-making body that addresses these issues. The passage of HB 6551 would be a great step toward protecting these communities and all of Connecticut from the burdens of the climate crisis.

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 consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna Word

New Haven, CT 06511