



Senate Bill 11

**AN ACT COORDINATING CONNECTICUT RESILIENCY PLANNING AND
BROADENING MUNICIPAL OPTIONS FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services

Committee on Environment

February 28, 2024

Good morning, Senator Lopes, Representative Gresko, Senator Harding, Representative Callahan and distinguished members of the Environment Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 11.

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) strongly supports SB 11 in its entirety as we seek to coordinate resiliency across scales, modernize our infrastructure data, and address the ever-increasing impacts of climate change. For the purposes of this testimony, we focus on the sections specifically related to DAS and support our sister agencies' testimony related to other sections of the bill. This proposal would memorialize the activities Governor Lamont directed in Executive Order 21-3. Building code changes apply to new construction and meaningful alterations or replacements of existing buildings and structures. It requires DAS to incorporate certain climate resiliency changes into the building process and to maintain concurrency with the most recent energy efficiency standards. These measures include:

- ensuring that at least five out of the 21 members of the Codes and Standards Committee have training, certification or experience in construction techniques that increase the resilience of buildings and building elements against the impacts of climate change
- ensuring that the training program administered by DAS includes education in construction techniques that maximize energy efficiency, minimize greenhouse gas emissions and increase the resiliency of buildings and building elements against the impacts of climate change
- requiring that the State Building Inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee revise the State Building Code to mandate that buildings and building elements are designed to provide optimum greenhouse gas emission reduction and resiliency against the impacts of climate change over the useful life of the building and incorporate the most recent International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). Current statute is tied to a specific year of the IECC, which could possibly limit our ability to keep pace with the most recent technical information. The [US Department of Energy](#) determined that the

change between the 2018 IECC code to the 2021 IECC code results in an 8.66% energy cost *savings*. The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory prepared a [report](#) for the US DOE and found that that, by keeping pace with energy efficiency codes, there would be a cumulative consumer cost savings for Connecticut commercial and residential construction of \$1.64 Billion between 2010 and 2040.

- directing the State Building Inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee, in consultation with the Commissioner of Administrative Services, to revise the State Building Code to:
 - require that buildings *meet or exceed optimum cost-effective building construction standards* concerning resiliency to flood and wind hazards, the impacts of climate change, and the most recent sea level change scenario; and
 - require that the State Building Code reference nationally accepted resiliency standards, including the Insurance Institute of Business & Home Safety's Fortified Construction Standard and any other applicable standards promulgated or endorsed by the United States Department of Energy, the Federal Emergency Management Agency or other relevant federal agencies. The use of nationally accepted standards, developed by industry experts, improves the analysis and application of the code. Resilient building codes reduce injuries and casualties during natural disasters as well as minimize indirect costs from business interruptions and lost income. [FEMA](#) estimates that the average construction costs for hazard-resistant building codes may be between 1 to 2% or \$4,500; however, the average loss avoided over 30 years, the life of a mortgage, can be \$1,600 per year or \$48,000. Avoided indirect costs, such as homelessness, lost personal income, business interruptions, lost municipal tax receipts, are not accounted for in these construction estimates but are critical to making sure our communities are able to withstand and recover quickly from these events.

This is an important bill in the state's continued work to prepare and adapt to the reality of the climate emergency and provides tools to our municipal partners to protect their communities from extreme weather patterns. DAS recognizes the challenges with the availability of building inspectors and has been working diligently with partners, such as the CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM), our Connecticut Technical Education and Career System, and industry experts to support that workforce, including work with our local, regional, and state partners to acquire federal funding under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. Furthermore, there are numerous market drivers, financial incentives (such as those that could be identified by the activities in Section 24 of the bill), and loans or grant programs, in addition to traditional financing mechanisms that would make greenhouse gas reduction, energy efficiency, and resiliency to extreme events attractive and preferable to standard construction. Currently, DAS requires more stringent sustainability requirements, including resiliency requirements, on state projects we administer through policy adoption of the International Green Construction Code (IGCC). The measures in this proposal, which would apply to all Connecticut construction projects upon passage, will further improve our ability to limit damage and disruption resulting from climate change. I urge passage of this important bill.