



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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CONNECTICUT'S OFFICIAL REPORT ON THE ENVIRONMENT HIGHLIGHTS PROGRESS MADE AND GOALS YET TO BE ACHIEVED.

Link here to the Annual Report (https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ_AnnualReport)

Hartford, April 20, 2022 – Yesterday, the Council delivered to Governor Lamont its 50th Anniversary Edition of the Annual Report, *Environmental Quality in Connecticut*. Since the Council's creation in 1971, its Annual Reports have succinctly documented the many changes to Connecticut's environment.

Generally, Connecticut's environment is better than it was ten years ago and significantly better than the environmental conditions from when the Council was created. Major improvements have been measured in the populations of raptors, such as bald eagles, and the quality of the state's air. Fifty years ago, seven pollutants exceeded the Federal Air Standards, with potential implications for public health. Now only two, ozone and fine particles smaller than 2.5 micrometers (PM2.5), occasionally exceed acceptable levels. While air quality has improved considerably over the last 50 years, the summer of 2021 had three days with an Air Quality Index (AQI) above 100 for fine particulates. The elevated levels of fine particulates in Connecticut were believed to be due, in part, to wildfires in the western U.S. and Canada this past summer.

As in previous years, climate change remains a significant challenge. While the causes of the warming climate are predominantly from beyond the State's border, the consequences are evident here in the state through more precipitation, shoreline flooding, exceedances in ground level ozone pollution, hypoxia in Long Island Sound, displacement of local biota – such as piping plover, beach closings and intrusions by invasive plants and insects.

“The state's recent efforts to decarbonize the electric grid, increase use of renewable resources for heating and cooling, and expand use of electric drive vehicles are noteworthy in addressing climate change,” stated Peter Hearn, the Council's executive director.

The Annual Report quantifies the challenges to achieving the state's goals for open space acquisition, farmland preservation, waste diversion, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. While the most recent data in the transportation sector suggests that driving and fuel consumption are down compared with the data for the years before COVID, the general trend over the last ten years indicates that emissions in the transportation sector, which were the largest contributor of greenhouse gases in Connecticut, have been increasing. So too have emissions of greenhouse gases associated with the generation of electricity in the state; the sector that was the second biggest contributor of greenhouse gases.

End

About the Council

Established in 1971, the Council on Environmental Quality submits Connecticut's annual report on the status of the environment to the Governor pursuant to section 22a-12 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Additional responsibilities of the Council include review of construction projects of other state agencies, publication of the twice-monthly Environmental Monitor, and investigation of citizens' complaints and allegations of violations of environmental laws.