



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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January 29, 2023

Re: Senate Bill 896 - An Act Concerning Tree Removal on Properties Under the Control of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Lopes and Rep. Gresko, Vice Chairs Sen. Hochadel and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Harding and Rep. Callahan, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee,

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) is a nine-member board that works independently of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to assess the condition of Connecticut's environment and report its findings annually to the Governor; recommend actions to improve state environmental programs; advise other state agencies on the environmental impacts of proposed projects; and investigate citizens' complaints and allegations of violations of environmental laws.

The Council supports the concepts of Senate Bill 896 that would 1) improve transparency and 2) provide a mechanism for the replanting of trees at state parks and campgrounds.

The proposed legislation includes a provision for a public hearing if any person objects to the proposed removal of any posted tree. This provision might delay necessary work and be administratively burdensome. As an alternative, the Council suggests that in addition to posting notice on the trees that are scheduled to be removed, DEEP could utilize the existing notice process and public meeting requirements of the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). The CEPA process requires notice of a proposed state action to be published in the [Environmental Monitor](#)<sup>1</sup> and requires that a public meeting be held "if twenty-five persons or an association having not less than twenty-five persons requests such a meeting within ten days of the publication of the notice in the Environmental Monitor". The Environmental Monitor is published twice a month on the Council's website and notice is provided to hundreds of subscribers and the town/city clerk for every municipality in the state. It should be noted that the CEPA notice requirements do not apply to "emergency measures undertaken in response to an immediate threat to public health or safety".

Thank you for consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Paul Aresta,  
Executive Director

<sup>1</sup> Council On Environmental Quality, Environmental Monitor – Current Issue; <https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor---Current-Issue>