



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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*Executive Director*

March 7, 2024

Re: Raised House Bill 5004 - An Act Concerning the Implementation of Certain Climate Change Measures

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 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 concept raised in House Bill 5004 regarding the need to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increase community coping capacities to handle the impacts of climate change. The Council also supports certain concepts raised in House Bill 5004 that would promote the development and use of zero-carbon generation resources, energy efficiency, energy storage, and electric drive vehicles to reduce GHG emissions; consideration of environmental sustainability and climate resiliency; and environmentally sustainable purchasing. As detailed in the Council's annual report, *[Environmental Quality in Connecticut](#)*, "the warming of Connecticut's climate threatens to undo much of the environmental progress of past decades".<sup>1</sup>

The Council **strongly supports** the provisions of Section 22 that require the Commissioner of DEEP to prepare a plan and program for advancing nature-based solutions in the state that support climate mitigation and adaptation. Such nature-based solutions program could include, but not be limited to: "(1) increasing carbon sequestration through increased forest extent, including reforestation, (2) controlling invasive species, (3) growing forests to greater maturity, (4) protecting carbon stocks through the avoided conversion of forests and wetlands to other purposes, (5) restoring coastal habitats, and (6) increasing climate-smart agriculture and soil conservation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while improving habitat and protecting biodiversity."

Thank you for consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Paul Aresta, Executive Director

<sup>1</sup> Council on Environmental Quality, *Environmental Quality in Connecticut*, May 3, 2023; <https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/AR-22-Gold/2022-CEQ-Annual-Report-eBook>