



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

NEWS RELEASE For Release on May 8, 2024

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

Denise Rodosevich

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

Charles Vidich

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Hartford, May 7, 2024 – The Council delivered to Governor Lamont its annual report, *Environmental Quality in Connecticut* for 2023. Since the Council's creation in 1971, its annual reports have succinctly documented the condition of Connecticut's environment.

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

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. The annual report highlights the progress made to improve Connecticut's environment, such as the quality of the state's water and air, the increase in the populations of raptors, such as bald eagles and osprey, and the effects of climate change.

While the causes of the changing climate are predominantly from beyond the State's borders, the consequences are evident here in the state through warmer temperatures, displacement of local biota – such as lobsters and fishes in Long Island Sound and songbirds in our forests. There was also a significant amount of precipitation during the summer months that increased surface water runoff and combined sewer overflows impacting water quality. Indeed, in 2023, the volume of combined sewer overflows exceeded two billion gallons; the area of hypoxic conditions in Long Island Sound was approximately 28 percent greater than the previous ten-year average; and the number of closures and advisories for Connecticut's coastal beaches was approximately 21 percent greater than the previous ten-year average.

“The state's recent efforts to address climate change are noteworthy, but much more needs to be done,” stated Keith Ainsworth, the Council's acting chairman. “While there are competing priorities to provide energy independence, housing opportunity and economic growth, protection and enhancement of the Connecticut's environment, including wetlands and watercourses, open space land, farmland, forests, etc. remains critically important.”

The most recent data indicate that Connecticut is making progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but there was an increase in greenhouse gas emissions - especially in the transportation sector. For the transportation sector, which the largest contributor of

greenhouse gas emissions, the annual report assesses the adoption of zero emission electric drive vehicles, fuel consumption, and use of public transportation.

New this year, the Council conducted a review of municipalities' use of the funds generated by the five-cent surcharge assessed on miniature beverage containers containing a spirit or liquor of fifty milliliters or less, also known as Nips, as required by Public Act 23-76. The data indicate that 162 out of the 169 municipalities in Connecticut received in aggregate a total of approximately \$6.6 million and that the reporting municipalities (132) expended approximately 42 percent of the funds to reduce the generation of solid waste, while approximately 58 percent were expended to reduce the impact of litter caused by such solid waste.

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.