



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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March 3, 2026

Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Needleman and Rep. Steinberg, Vice Chairs Sen. Maroney and Rep. Sanchez, Ranking Members Sen. Fazio and Rep. Marra, Distinguished Members of the Energy and Technology Committee

Re: Raised Bill No. 5340 - An Act Concerning Renewable Power Generation – **Support**

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

The Council **SUPPORTS** the concepts in Raised Bill 5340 that would establish successor programs for the Residential Renewable Energy Solutions program, the Non-residential Renewable Energy Solutions Program, and the Shared Clean Energy Facility program. As detailed in the Council's annual report, *[Environmental Quality in Connecticut](#)*, approximately 1,270 megawatts of installed solar capacity, consisting of more than 106,000 installations through 2024, have helped Connecticut improve air quality and energy reliability.

The Council has concerns regarding the provisions of Section 6, which would require the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to develop and implement a program to support the development of agrivoltaics projects in the state. The Council notes that [Connecticut General Statutes \(CGS\) Section 16-50k\(a\)](#) requires that a solar photovoltaic facility, with a capacity of two or more megawatts to be located on prime farmland, secure a determination from the Department of Agriculture (DOAG) that such project will not materially affect the status of such land as prime farmland. In making such determination, the DOAG has established certain requirements for agrivoltaics¹ including, but not limited to, an Agrivoltaics Farm Plan; a vegetation and soil management plan prepared by a soil scientist; and a soil health assessment performed by a soil scientist.

Connecticut's farmlands have a role in mitigation of and resiliency to the adverse impacts of climate change, in addition to the production of local food and agricultural products. Well managed farms can store carbon from the atmosphere in soil and plants, capture and store water from precipitation events, and can provide biomass for renewable energy. And while the Council supports the development of renewable energy facilities on appropriate sites, including the co-location of renewable energy systems to support agricultural operations, the Council does not support the conversion of productive agricultural land to energy generation facilities. The Council suggests refinement of Section 6 to 1) include examples of agrivoltaics activities that could be approved for an "agrivoltaics project",

¹ DOAG, Agrivoltaics Requirements for Solar Energy Generating Facilities located in whole or in part on Prime Farmland, Revised January 2026; <https://portal.ct.gov/doag/-/media/doag/adarc/solar/doag-agrivoltaics-requirements-final-11326.pdf>

such as raising the height, spacing, and layout of solar panels to allow for crops and/or to support pollinator plants; 2) require that DEEP, in coordination with DOAG, study how best to deploy renewable energy systems while supporting agriculture in the state; and 3) revising the capacity of solar projects that require a review and determination by the DOAG under CGS Section 16-50k(a) from two megawatts to one megawatt, consistent with the provisions of Section 6 (1) of Raised Bill 5340.

Thank you for your consideration of the Council's comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Aresta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul Aresta
Executive Director