



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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March 12, 2026

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

Re: Raised Bill No. 5521 - An Act Concerning Sterile Cultivars

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 provision in Section 2** of Raised Bill 5521 that would revise Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 16-50k to reduce the capacity of solar photovoltaic projects that require a determination from the Department of Agriculture (DoAG) and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) from two (2) megawatts (MW) to one (1) MW. As detailed in the Council's 2024 annual report, *Environmental Quality in Connecticut*,¹ there were 20 proposals for solar projects submitted to the Connecticut Siting Council in 2024, and twelve of those projects, totaling 30.9 megawatts of solar capacity, were exempt from the requirement to obtain a determination from DoAG and DEEP, mostly due to the capacity of the proposed projects. The proposed revision to CGS 16-50k would better protect core forests and prime farmland and encourage responsible agrivoltaics practices, under the review of DoAG. The Council suggests that energy generation projects with a capacity greater than 65 MW should continue to comply with the requirements of an application for a Certificate.

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

Sincerely,

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

¹ Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality, 2024 Environmental Quality in Connecticut, Solar Photovoltaics; <https://portal.ct.gov/ceq/ar-24-gold/2024-ceq-annual-report-ebook/waste-diversion/solar-photovoltaics>