

CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

Testimony
Raised House Bill No. 5285
Education Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
March 4, 2022

Co-Chairs McCrory and Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Barry and Daugherty Abrams, Ranking Members McCarty and Berthel, and members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony **in support** of **House Bill No. 5285, An Act Concerning the Public School Curriculum**.

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its ~130 land trusts. We advocate for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and work to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

Connecticut is ranked third in the country behind California and Massachusetts as having the highest number of land trusts. With a mission to conserve and protect land *in perpetuity*, our state's land trusts are critical private partners with their communities and the state in pursuing and maximizing natural climate solutions – including the development and implementation of critical forest, agricultural, grasslands, and wetlands policies and protections.

Land trusts are also essential stakeholders in ensuring that people build connections with land and nature. From the farthest rural corners of the state to our largest urban centers, providing experiential learning opportunities for children is especially important – with land trusts often working in partnership with their respective local school districts to offer outdoor programs that complement state mandated science curriculum.

Requiring climate change instruction in public school curriculum consistent with the existing Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) will provide new and enhance existing collaborative opportunities between local land trusts and schools across the state to help educators build lesson plans and provide experiential field opportunities that align with the NGSS.

According to a recent national survey from the Yale Program on Climate Communication, 79 percent of registered voters agree that schools should teach children about climate change, including its causes and consequences. In 2020, nearly 40% of surveyed U.S. students said climate change was the biggest issue facing the world today. HB 5285 ensures that Connecticut engages students about the implications of climate change on their lives, the environment, and their communities, and prepares them as future leaders.

We thank the committee for this opportunity to submit comments, and for all you do. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

