

# CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill Nos. 5052, 5231 & 5232  
Energy and Technology Committee  
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director  
Public Hearing on February 27, 2024

Co-Chairs Needleman and Steinberg, Vice-Chairs McCrory and Foster, Ranking Members Fazio and Buckbee, and members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its ~120 land trusts. CLCC is a 501(c)(3) organization operating statewide. Our mission is to elevate and strengthen land conservation in Connecticut.

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in favor of:

**House Bill No. 5052**, An Act Supporting Solar Energy In Schools

**House Bill No. 5231**, An Act Concerning Revisions To The State's Nonresidential Renewable Energy Program And Shared Clean Energy Facility Program

**House Bill No. 5232**, An Act Concerning Solar Projects Throughout The State

Addressing the escalating impacts of climate change and supporting the state's efforts to achieve its ambitious carbon neutrality goals demands a multifaceted approach, encompassing not only the reduction of energy consumption but also a transition to renewable energy sources and increased investments in land conservation and natural climate solutions. Furthermore, consistent with recommendations from The Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) Phase I Report as well as from various GC3 Working and Natural Lands Working Group subgroups and other reports (e.g. PRFCT Future Working Group), avoidance of natural and working lands should be the primary goal for the siting of large-scale solar projects and a priority for any energy development.

It is through this lens, that CLCC offers its support for House Bill Nos. 5052, 5231, and 5232 as steps forward in promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency measures that help to incentivize the development of large-scale solar infrastructure on existing built environments.

HB 5052 seeks to integrate renewable energy into our communities by facilitating the installation of rooftop solar arrays on school buildings. By empowering municipalities and school districts to invest in solar infrastructure, this bill not only promises substantial energy savings but also fosters environmental awareness among future generations.

HB 5231 addresses the need to eliminate renewable energy caps for nonresidential consumers, thereby unlocking the potential for expanded solar development. CLCC joins other advocates in supporting the extension of the SCEF program and increasing the annual cap to 100 MW per year. This adjustment would facilitate greater participation in renewable energy initiatives by aligning with commercial program caps.



HB 5232 focuses on enhancing accessibility to solar projects across the state. Its provisions, such as establishing a uniform capacity tax and expediting the permitting process for solar projects, are crucial for streamlining the development of solar infrastructure, particularly solar canopies. By simplifying the siting process and emphasizing community benefit requirements, this bill encourages the utilization of paved and developed areas for solar deployment, optimizing our use of existing built environments.

In conclusion, we urge the Committee to approve these bills, which collectively represent significant strides toward promoting renewable energy and advancing our state's sustainability goals. Thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments and for all you do. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.