

CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill No. 5225
Environment Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
February 28, 2024

Co-Chairs Lopes and Gresko, Vice-Chairs Hochadel and Palm, Ranking Members Harding and Callahan, and members of the Environment 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 **H.B. No. 5225, An Act Concerning The Recommendations of The Invasive Plants Council.**

In all capacities, CLCC's goal is to safeguard our natural and working lands, prioritize the vital role of nature-based solutions in mitigating the escalating effects of the inter-related crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, and ensure that everyone everywhere has access to the benefits of nature. It is through this lens CLCC offers the following testimony concerning HB 5225.

Established in 2003 under Connecticut General Statutes (§22a-381 et seq.), the Invasive Plants Council is responsible for developing educational programs, recommending strategies for controlling invasive species, updating lists of invasive plants, supporting research on invasive plant control, promoting the development of noninvasive varieties, and advocating for legislative action to address the spread of invasive species. CLCC supports HB 5225, which seeks to implement the recent recommendations of the Invasive Plants Council by prohibiting the sale and cultivation of certain plants determined to be invasive or potentially invasive.

[According to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection \(DEEP\)](#), invasive species significantly threaten Connecticut's biodiversity, ecological integrity, and human health. Through their aggressive growth, these non-native species compete with and displace native flora, leading to habitat degradation and loss of native species. The spread of invasives disrupts ecosystems and is a driver of biodiversity loss. These negative impacts are further exacerbated by climate change. The proliferation of invasives not only presents costly stewardship challenges in the field, both for public and private lands, but also magnifies the social and economic impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss.

By prohibiting the sale and cultivation of plants identified as invasive or potentially invasive by the Invasive Plants Council, we can prevent further introduction and spreading of these harmful species within our state. Such action is essential to safeguarding the health and resilience of our native ecosystems, which provide critical habitat for wildlife, support biodiversity, and offer recreational opportunities for our citizens.

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.

