

CONNECTICUT  
Land Conservation Council

Testimony on Senate Joint Resolution No. 193  
Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director  
March 13, 2023

Co-Chairs Flexer and Blumenthal, Vice-Chairs Slap and Morrin Bello, Ranking Members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco, and members of the Government Administration and Elections 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. CLCC envisions a future where every Connecticut community is supported and sustained by a diverse mix of conserved land, and land conservation is embraced as an essential community value.*

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in support of **Senate Joint Resolution No. 193: Resolution Proposing An Amendment To The State Constitution Regarding Environmental Rights.**

SJ 193 proposes a new Green Amendment to the Connecticut Constitution. The resolution codifies (1) the rights of all Connecticut residents to a clean environment, stable climate, and sustainable ecosystem and recognizes these rights as essential to the public's public health, safety, and general welfare; and (2) the role of government, at every level, as trustee of the state's natural resources, including climate – meaning, an affirmative duty to protect these natural resources.

CLCC believes this Amendment is crucial to recognizing and elevating the public's right to a clean environment and stable climate. This Amendment would empower the people of Connecticut to proactively enforce laws and ensure their equitable application, particularly in underserved and vulnerable communities that bear the brunt of climate change and other environmental and health hazards.

If the Connecticut General Assembly approves this Amendment and subsequently by voters through a statewide ballot referendum, Connecticut would join the ranks of three other states in the country to have a Constitutional Green Amendment (i.e., included as part of the Bill of Rights), demonstrating our commitment to environmental protection and sustainability.

In November 2019, in an emphatic display of commitment to environmental protection, the public demonstrated their firm desire to better protect public lands with a Constitutional Amendment through the resounding passage of Ballot Question #2. We urge the Committee to move SJ 193 through the legislative process, recognizing the importance of the public's voice in this matter and providing the people of Connecticut with the same opportunity to decide on a Green Amendment to our Constitution.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on this important topic. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

