

CONNECTICUT  
Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill No. 5330  
Transportation Committee  
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director  
March 4, 2024

Chairwoman Cohen, Co-Chair Lemar, Vice-Chairs Lopes and Berger-Girvalo, Ranking Members Hwang and Kennedy, and members of the Transportation 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 regarding certain sections of House Bill No. 5330, An Act Implementing Recommendations of The Department of Transportation. **CLCC's testimony is limited to Sections 1-4 of the bill, which we strongly oppose.**

The Connecticut Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) (C.G.S. Sections 22a-14 et seq.) was enacted in 1971 to protect the public trust in the state's natural environment. CEPA provides substantive and procedural rights to interested citizens and entities, including allowing intervention in land use proceedings that they allege would unreasonably pollute, impair, or destroy Connecticut's natural resources.

Sections 1-4 of HB 5330 would undermine the CEPA process for particular Department of Transportation (DOT) infrastructure projects that require permits from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Specifically, these sections would limit the ability of members of the public to petition DEEP for a public hearing for DOT proposals that potentially impact tidal wetlands, inland wetlands (for State projects), the shoreline (structure and dredging permits), and floodplains.

Working statewide to support Connecticut's land trusts and communities in their land conservation efforts, much of CLCC's work involves meeting with local citizens with the most profound connections and intimate knowledge of their region's natural environment. Sections 1-4 of HB 5330 will limit participation in the public process for the people CEPA is intended to empower. We respectfully urge the Commission to remove Sections 1-4 of the bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our testimony and for all you do. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

