

CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

Testimony on Raised Senate Bill No. 354
Committee on Labor and Public Employees
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Co-Chairs Kushner and Porter, Vice-Chairs Osten and Hall, Ranking Members Miner and Polletta, and Members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employees:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council in support of **Senate Bill No. 354, An Act Establishing a Green New Deal for Connecticut**. We thank the Committee for raising this important bill.

As the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its 137+/- land trusts, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

CLCC supports SB 354 which: (1) sets goals to reach 100% reduction in greenhouse gases through clean and renewable electricity, transportation and buildings; (2) creates green jobs and assists workers in the transition to clean energy; (3) addresses environmental equity; (4) ensures opportunities for public input; (5) requires climate change impact note information on bills; and (6) requires follow-through and accountability in meeting the state's climate goals (including provisions that failure to comply shall constitute unreasonable pollution pursuant to Chapter 439 of the general statutes.)

Consistent with our mission, CLCC is especially supportive of Section 1 which incorporates consideration of land use and management into the state's goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The impacts of rising levels of GHGs on Connecticut include contributing to sea level rise; creating extreme weather events; worsening air quality; an increasing invasives and overall natural systems upheaval. Natural climate solutions — including protection and related climate management of forests, farmland, grasslands, and wetlands — can provide up to 21% of the cost-effective carbon reductions in the U.S needed to keep global temperature increases under 2 degrees Celsius. (National Academy of Sciences 2017). The benefits of land conservation for the climate work both ways — absorbing greenhouse gases and also preventing the release of significant levels of carbon emissions that would be caused by deforestation and conversion of open lands to active development.

SB 354 Section 1 (d) (1) is a step forward in the recognition of the importance of natural climate solutions by requiring the state's schedules of proposed regulations, policies and strategies to ensure the reduction of GHG emissions include measures to achieve long-term carbon sequestration and promote best management practices in land use, agriculture and forestry (subsection D) and healthy forests that support clean air and water, biodiversity, and sequester carbon (subsection I).

On behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, I thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

