



TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT of HB 5004**

AAC THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTAIN CLIMATE CHANGE MEASURES
March 8, 2024

To: Co-Chairs Sen. Lopes and Rep. Gresko, Vice Chairs Sen. Hochadel and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Harding and Rep. Callahan, and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

CTLCV applauds the Environment Committee for raising this important climate legislation to reduce our polluting greenhouse gas emissions.

We serve on the steering committee of the CT Coalition for Climate Action that helped to shape this legislation. HB 5004 reflects many conversations and negotiations between lawmakers, administration officials, business leaders, and environmental advocates.

This bill re-establishes Connecticut's commitment to addressing climate change and protecting public health and sets forth a structure to do so in a common-sense, prudent, and positive manner.

This bill touches on many areas that include advancing the state's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by planning for the phase-out of our reliance on natural gas, investing in renewable energy and in green economy startup businesses, supporting local sustainable purchasing, and leveraging nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change.

All twenty-two sections in the bill are important and will help us make progress toward our climate goals. We would like to emphasize four areas that we are especially excited to support:

- Updating the **GLOBAL WARMING SOLUTIONS ACT** to reach net-zero emissions economy-wide by 2050. This calls for a plan outlining strategies to meet these targets and has a Citizen Suit provision to enforce the Act.
- Expanding the pace and scale of **SOLAR ENERGY** coupled with battery storage.
- Installing 310,000 **HEAT PUMPS** by 2030 and supporting ultra energy efficient buildings.
- Directing DEEP to develop a plan using **NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS** for both mitigating and adapting to climate change.

This is an opportunity to align our state's policies with the public's demand for action on climate. The legislative updates, programs, and creative incentives outlined below will achieve the necessary GHG reductions to have a meaningful impact on our climate, health, economy, and environment.

We all deserve the right to clean air and a sustainable future. Thank you for considering these comments and supporting our environment.

SUMMARY OF HB 5004

Sec. 1: Declares a Climate Crisis

Sec. 2: Sets GHG emissions reduction targets **for state agencies** to achieve by 2030, 2040, and to reach net zero emissions by 2050. It codifies Gov. Lamont Executive Order that established a goal for 100% zero carbon electricity by 2030

Sec. 3-5: Updates the **Global Warming Solutions Act** to reach net-zero emissions **economywide by 2050**. This calls for a plan outlining strategies to meet these targets and has a citizen suit provision to enforce the GWSA

Sec. 6: Requires PURA to open a docket on the "Future of natural Gas" to make recommendation on **phasing out natural gas** in accordance with our climate targets

Sec. 7: State **permitting for transportation and energy** infrastructure must consider GHG emissions and recommend how to mitigate impacts

Sec. 8: "**Energy Data Bill of Rights**" to make public data available online how and where we use energy in the state

Sec. 9-10: Provides **incentives to businesses** that engage in environmentally sustainable practices and waives certain business fees

Sec. 11: Creates the **CT Clean Economy Council** to focus on workforce strategy and job training that will support an equitable transition to a clean economy

Sec. 12: Establishes a pilot program to serve as a new business incubator for **zero carbon start-up companies**

Sec. 13: removes the limits (or “caps”) on **commercial solar** programs until federal IRA dollars are exhausted

Sec. 14: Increases the state’s **energy storage** targets and increases storage incentives.

Sec. 15: Increases the reimbursement for **school construction** by 10% if they include renewable energy or energy efficiency projects in work

Sec. 16-17: Sets a goal for the installation of **310,000 heat pumps** in the state by 2030

Sec. 18: Requires **municipal Plans of Conservation and Development** to evaluate environmental sustainability and climate resiliency for their towns

Sec. 19-20: Requires OPM to develop a model sustainable **purchasing policy** for municipalities, and funding for municipalities that implement the policy

Sec. 21: Requires new or renovated **state buildings** to utilize electrical systems that do not utilize fossil fuels

Sec. 22: Requires DEEP to outline a plan and program to use **nature-based solutions** to address climate change such as land acquisition, reforestation, coastal habitats, wetlands, and more