



TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT**
HB 6813 AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEABIRD AND
SHOREBIRD PROTECTION PROGRAM
March 10, 2023

To: Honored 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, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to comment **in support of HB 6813** that would better protect important shorebirds and seabirds that nest on Connecticut's beaches.

While there are efforts by DEEP to protect these nesting areas with string fencing and signage, the lack of enforcement and public awareness has resulted in many fatal encounters for the birds with humans and their dogs. This became especially bad during Covid, when more people discovered the parks and beaches, and brought their pets to run free with little awareness of the damage they were causing.

We **MUST** do more to protect our shorebirds and the wildlife that live in these fragile habitats. At most nesting sites, rules about pets and vehicles are already in place. However, staffing in the parks has greatly diminished in recent years so enforcement is a challenge. **That is why an infraction—not just a warning—is the simplest way to increase awareness and help protect nesting birds along our coasts.**

Please vote in favor of HB 6813 as an important step in the protection of our state's endangered wildlife.

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