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Connecticut Chapter
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Government Administration and Elections Committee
March 16, 2009
Testimony In Opposition to
SB 839 An Act Concerning Mergers And Consolidations Of Various State Agencies

The following testimony was received by the Sierra Club for submission at this hearing. It is submitted without change.

This is to request that CEQ be removed from the list of agencies consolidated in SB839. I have had the opportunity to address concerns to this agency regarding State land transfer procedures, impervious surfaces at a State facility, and tidal flow energy in estuaries.

The response has been thoroughly evaluated and helpful. Moreover, I have found their studies and publications very useful in understanding the needs and priorities for environmental protection and mitigation.

The ability of this agency to provide oversight and public airing of issues independently of the DEP helps not only the public but the DEP itself to stay on course as an efficient and effective agency. The cost is minimal, and the service provided is very cost-effective.

Please save CEQ as an independent agency.

David Bingham
Salem, CT
Salem Land Trust, Sierra, Audubon, Rivers Alliance, Salem Planning and Zoning Commission

I would like to speak on SB839, "An Act Concerning Mergers and Consolidation of Various State Agencies". It's very important that CEQ remain funded and self autonomous to provide the oversight needed of governmental agencies for public benefit. They have a long history of providing needed and accurate data that holds up under scrutiny and deserve to continue as an independent entity.

John Blake
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Chairman CT Chapter, Sierra Club

Sirs: I am appalled that Governor Rell's proposals as contained in SB 839 aim to merge a weakened Council on Environmental Quality into the DEP. The CEQ has been an invaluable independent voice for the environment, and a forum where the concerns of our citizens are voiced and acted upon. The CEQ has been particularly helpful to our Land Trust in its advocacy for better laws protecting open space and best practices for protecting inland wetlands. Please fund and keep independent this efficient, effective, essential guardian agency: oppose SB 839.

Very truly yours,

Charles N. Leach Jr., M.D

174 Main Street

Farmington, CT 06032

President, Farmington Land Trust

Clinical Professor, UCONN School of Medicine

President, Farmington Land Trust , Member, CLCC, CFE, LTA, Sierra Club et al.

I am writing in response to SB839. The Council on Environmental Quality is one of the most objective, influential, and unpartisan boards that exist today. Without its independent status, the group cannot effectively do its job of monitoring and keeping in check the state's environmental programs and policies. I was the Council's Environmental Analyst from 1993-2003 and can honestly say that working with Executive Director Karl Wagener and the Council members has become the standard for which I compare other boards that I work with today. And none of them have come close to having the integrity, dedication, and objectivity of the CT CEQ. I urge you to keep the CEQ's structure and staff in place.

Melissa Ryan

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Southeastern New England Marine Educators Association, National Marine Educators Association