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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Government Elections and Administration Committee
March 7, 2011

Testimony on
H.B. No. 6600 AA Implementing the Recommendations of the
Legislative Paperless Task Force and the
Task Force to Study the Reduction of State Agency Paper and Duplicative Procedures.

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Sierra Club-Connecticut Chapter. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

The Sierra Club strongly endorses the campaign to reduce paperwork in state government. Obviously, there are significant environmental benefits to paperwork reduction. For most of us, direct and painfree access to online documents satisfies our needs. However, it is very important that paper records remain available to those of the public who do not have online capability.

Good government requires ready public access to information. As an advocacy organization, the Sierra Club advises that access is important to our mission. The public interest is best served by protecting such access.

We have two suggestions to improve the legislation.

Funding for preparation of public hearing transcripts has been eliminated in the past. These transcripts are an important part of the legislative record. Sierra recommends that this committee takes steps to make sure the hearings are transcribed and made available to the public without charge. In this, we are delighted to join the recommendations made by the CBIA by letter from Kevin Hennessy to the Task Force to Study Converting Legislative Documents From Paper to Electronic Form dated Nov. 18, 2010, and reprinted on page 60 of the task force's report dated Feb. 25, 2011.

Following passage of the underlying legislation, state agency regulations are written, sent to the Regulations Committee because of a 1980 amendment to the state constitution permitting such oversight of the executive by the legislature, and then implemented by the agency. While the legislative record establishes intent, it is the language of the agency regulations themselves which actually have the most direct bearing on the activities in question. Electronic access to current versions these regulations is critically important. We recommend that the committee specify that the regulations of every state agency be easily accessible online.