



Testimony to the Committee on Environment, Connecticut General Assembly Regarding

S.B. No. 1013, AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION
AND DATA COLLECTION.

by

James O'Donnell

Professor of Marine Sciences
University of Connecticut
1080 Shennecossett Road
Groton, CT 06340

email: James.ODonnell@uconn.edu

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and members of the Committee on Environment, thank you for the opportunity to comment on S.B. 1013, an Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation and Data Collection. I am confident that this bill will assist the State address several challenges that we must soon face as a consequence of climate change and I encourage you to support it.

For the last thirty-five years I have studied the physical processes that determine the movement of water in the coastal ocean. I have paid particular emphasis to Long Island Sound and have developed an extensive network of instruments to measure wind, waves and currents. It is clear to me that sea level is rising around our State. I also live by the shore and I have witnessed continuous coastal development. It is an unfortunate reality that our coasts are changing and the recent storms, and the damage they caused, are a sign of things to come. We can prevent flooding and wave damage in some areas by modifying our construction standards and building sea walls, but these are costly and can compromise natural habitats. Reaching an appropriate balance between adaptation strategies requires the dissemination of science and engineering advances to State and municipal officials, practicing engineers and contractors, and the public. Some novel development work is also necessary.

The faculty of the University of Connecticut has a wide range of expertise and facilities that are relevant to the development and assessment of coastal protection and adaptation strategies. In fact, we have many internationally recognized leaders in these areas. I have consulted with members of the Sea Grant Program, the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the College of Agriculture and, in the best traditions of Land Grant and Sea Grant institutions, they have expressed their willingness to contribute to the type of service that is called for in the bill.

If you have any questions, I would be happy to try to address them.