

## Testimony on House Bill 5408

Dear Connecticut Legislators:

I think trees are one of Connecticut's most valuable assets. Any legislation passed about how utility companies interact with trees should:

1. Insist on biannual review and evaluation of the plan, including public comment, to allow for adjustments as needed
2. Require utilities to obtain written consent from property owners for removal of trees on private property
3. Improve the definitions of what is a hazardous tree and require each tree to be assessed by utilizing the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) *Basic Tree Risk Assessment Form* or similar industry-wide system.
4. Require utilities to plant a replacement tree for every tree removed
5. Require utilities to grind stumps of removed trees
6. Require that utilities provide a direct phone line to a customer service representative assigned to handle questions on (and/or objections to) tree trimming and removal
7. Create greater accountability of tree service contractors through the requirement of a performance bond
8. Allow a Town or municipalities Tree Warden to have final say to a trees fate, based not only on potential hazards, but also to the importance of or historical presence of any given tree in any given neighborhood.

Thank you.

Heather Jessen  
63 Ogden St.  
New Haven, CT 06511