



**Testimony of Connecticut Fund for the Environment  
Before the Committee on Environment**

***In support of***  
***H.B. No. 5579, AN ACT CONCERNING BUILDING RESILIENCY***  
***AND THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON CLIMATE CHANGE***

Submitted by Shannon Laun  
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March 11, 2016

*Connecticut Fund for the Environment (CFE) is a non-profit environmental organization with over 5,500 members statewide. The mission of CFE, and its bi-state program Save the Sound, is to protect and improve the land, air, and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. We use legal and scientific expertise and bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.*

Dear Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, and members of the Committee on Environment:

Connecticut Fund for the Environment submits this testimony in support of Proposed H.B. No. 5579, An Act Concerning Building Resiliency and the Governor's Council on Climate Change. We thank the co-chairs and members of the Committee for your recognition that climate change poses enormous challenges for the state, which we must address. We support H.B. 5579 because it would increase building resiliency, require a new greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to be established, and improve emissions reporting requirements. We include suggestions for further strengthening the bill in our testimony below.

**I. Building Resiliency**

This bill would help the state prepare for the impacts of climate change by requiring the state building code to implement changes necessary to make buildings more resilient to wind and flooding. This is important because climate change increases both the likelihood and severity of severe weather events, such as hurricanes and heavy downpours, which may include high winds and can lead to flooding. In addition, sea level rise poses an increasingly serious threat to the state's coastline, which is already vulnerable to flooding. Changing the state building code as necessary to ensure that buildings are more resilient to wind and flooding will help prevent and minimize damage resulting from these types of severe weather events.

**II. GHG Emissions Reduction Targets**

The bill would also amend the Global Warming Solutions Act, which requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at least 80 percent below 2001 levels by 2050, and also includes various reporting requirements. First, the bill would require an interim GHG reduction target for 2030 to be established by July 1, 2016. CFE recommends amending the bill to require interim targets for 2030 and 2040 to be established no later than October 1, 2016.

CFE strongly supports the establishment of interim targets, which are essential to ensure that the state stays on track to meet the 2050 target. Other states in New England and around the country are working to establish interim targets that will enable them to meet their 2050 targets. The Governor's Council on Climate Change, which is tasked with establishing an interim target or targets, has discussed this issue at length. CFE President Don Strait is a member of the Council and is actively involved in the Council's decisionmaking process.

No formal decision has been made, but there was strong support for establishing interim targets for both 2030 and 2040. Council members generally agreed that it makes sense to have targets *at least* every ten years, with regular check-ins at more frequent intervals. This approach would ensure that the state stays on track to meet the 2050 target and that the targets remain politically relevant through changing administrations. The bill should reflect this emerging consensus and require interim targets to be established for both 2030 and 2040.

In addition, the date by which the targets must be established should be changed from July 1, 2016 to October 1, 2016. This change is needed because the Council will still be working on the state's new climate plan in July, and the stakeholder process will still be ongoing. Thus, it would be premature to set the targets by July 1. Setting the targets by October 1 would enable the targets to be established with the benefit of stakeholder input and more robust data.

### **III. GHG Emissions Reporting Requirements**

The bill also amends the reporting requirements in the Global Warming Solutions Act to ensure that emissions reductions achieved by state agencies are included in triennial reports. The bill would also require the reports to include actions taken in furtherance of the Global Climate Leadership Memorandum of Understanding, an estimate of agencies' GHG emissions, and an explanation for why the emissions have increased or decreased since the previous report. CFE supports these changes, which would improve monitoring and reporting of GHG emissions reductions.

In addition, we recommend adding the following language: "Each state agency shall consider the impact on greenhouse gas emissions in its planning and decisions and shall, where feasible, select options that minimize the production of greenhouse gas emissions." This new language would ensure that state agencies consider the impacts of their activities on GHG emissions and encourage them to minimize their emissions. California's GHG "report card" program for state agencies takes a similar approach and has been very successful.

In conclusion, CFE supports H.B. 5579, which would help Connecticut increase building resiliency, establish new targets for GHG reductions, and strengthen reporting requirements. We respectfully request the Committee to consider the amendments we recommend, which would further strengthen the bill and ensure that the bill's requirements are consistent with the state's climate planning process and timeline.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

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