February 27, 2019

Representative Toni Walker  
House Chair  
Senator Cathy Osten  
Senate Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Co-Chairwomen Walker and Osten, Ranking Members Lavielle and Formica and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of Audubon Connecticut, the state affiliate of the National Audubon Society. My name is Leslie Kane and I am the Managing Director for Audubon Connecticut. I would like to testify on maintaining current funding levels for FY 2020 and FY 2021 for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). We recognize the state’s budget constraints and the difficulties in balancing a budget by this Committee. As budget negotiations unfold, we hope you will oppose disproportionate cuts and legislative initiatives that undermine our state’s conservation and energy programs, all of which contribute to a healthy economy in our state.

Audubon Connecticut also opposes removing finds for the Community Investment Act (CIA) from dedicated funds and into a line item in the general fund as proposed in Governor Lamont’s budget. A dedicated revenue stream ensures that the important programs funded through the Community Investment Act continue to survive in a period of economic constraints and budget cuts. Moving the funds into the General fund leave the program more vulnerable to continued budget cuts and a potential raiding of funds in the future.

Audubon Connecticut, the state office of the National Audubon Society, is one of Connecticut’s premier conservation and environmental education organizations. With over 17,000 members, supporters, and partners across the state, through land stewardship, science, education, and advocacy, we work to preserve habitat and protect bird species that are of state, national and global concern. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth’s biological diversity.

Thank you for your time and attention to these important matters. Please continue to fund programs that protect the environment, CEQ and CIA.

Sincerely,

Leslie Kane  
Managing Director for Connecticut