

Thank you for the opportunity to testify IN SUPPORT of HB 5103, An Act Requiring an Evaluation of the State's Environmental Justice Law.

Connecticut is known as a nationwide leader in the fight against climate change, however our state has not done enough to address environmental injustice. Low-income black and Latino communities in Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven, and Bridgeport are disproportionately impacted by climate change, pollution, and other environmental threats.

In 2008, Connecticut signed its first environmental justice legislation into law. Although imperfect, it was a step in the right direction. It recognized the unjust placement of "affecting facilities" (power plants, sewage treatment plants, waste incinerators, and landfills) near low-income and minority communities. These toxic sites are responsible for disproportionately high rates of asthma and other respiratory diseases among low-income residents and communities of color. The original law ensured that affecting facilities could not be placed near these communities without meaningful public participation and input.

The bill before you today, HB 5103, proposes a number of revisions to the existing law. It would strengthen the language and expand the scope of the bill in order to provide more opportunity for public participation and greater protections for environmental justice communities.

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