



**SIERRA
CLUB**

**Connecticut Chapter
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Dear Energy and Technology Committee Chairs Needleman and Arconti, Vice-Chairs Lesser and Allie-Brennan, Ranking Members Formica and Ferraro, and distinguished members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Sierra Club and our more than 40,000 members and supporters in Connecticut, thank you for the opportunity to testify on a number of bills before the committee today.

**SB 10 An Act Concerning Certain Recommendations Regarding
Climate Change**

Sierra Club Connecticut supports SB 10, An Act Concerning Certain Recommendations Regarding Climate Change. This bill would codify the goal of 100% carbon free electricity by 2040 set out in Governor Lamont's Executive Order 3. Moving Connecticut to zero carbon emissions from electricity is an essential step to mitigate the climate crisis and help Connecticut reach its greenhouse gas reduction goals mandated by the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), and one Sierra Club strongly supports. Connecticut's GWSA, adopted to combat climate change, requires a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to at least 45 percent below the level emitted in 2001 by 2030, and to at least 80 percent below the level emitted in 2001 by 2050.¹

We support the procurement of energy storage, additional energy efficiency, and demand response, all important components of our clean energy future and reaching 100% zero carbon electricity. We also support adopting California's medium and heavy duty vehicle emission standards.

In addition to 100% carbon free electricity by 2040, we think it is critically important to set goals for the transportation and building sectors, as deep decarbonization is necessary in those sectors to meet our emission reduction mandates, and decarbonization in these sectors will impact electricity. The movement to 100% carbon free electricity by 2040 along with the steps necessary to meet our GWSA targets will grow jobs and transform our economy. As such, Sierra Club Connecticut urges an intentional and proactive approach to ensure good jobs and address environmental and energy equity. This should include workforce development, training and apprenticeship programs, and prevailing wage and

¹ Sec. 22a-200a of the Connecticut General Statutes



project labor agreements for all new projects related to the transition. It should also include targeted investments and workforce development in vulnerable communities.

HB 5350 An Act Concerning Natural Gas Infrastructure

To address the climate crisis and meet our state's greenhouse gas reduction mandates, Connecticut must reduce the use of fossil fuels including "natural" gas. The first step to doing that is to stop the expansion of gas that is currently underway in Connecticut. Connecticut's gas expansion plan charges ratepayers to expand gas service, to convert customers to gas. Our policies also allow ratepayers to be charged to build new interstate pipelines; a policy that has not been used. We also provide subsidies for gas equipment and appliances.

It is critically important that Connecticut end gas expansion and plan an orderly transition to zero-emission renewable thermal technologies. Fracked gas which is 98% methane is a major source of the increase in global heating. Robert Howarth, Cornell University, has published extensive research² on this topic and concludes that natural gas is responsible for much of the recent increases in methane emissions, and that the best strategy to address climate change is to move as quickly as possible away from natural gas, reducing both carbon dioxide and methane emissions.

The Governor's Council on Climate Change in its 2018 report "Building a Low Carbon Future for Connecticut"³ calls for Connecticut to "accelerate decarbonizing building energy end-uses through increasing deployment of renewable thermal technologies (RTTs) such as cold-climate air- and ground- source heat pumps and heat pump water heaters.

House Bill 5350 takes steps to end gas expansion like repealing the pipeline tax, investigating the hurdle rate, and requiring prevailing wage for repair work which Sierra Club supports. We also support repair of identified leaks, particularly environmentally significant leaks, and hazardous leaks which are already required to be repaired. However, Sierra Club Connecticut has concerns with and opposes section 2 (c) of House Bill 5350 as currently written. Our concern is that accelerating replacement of the entire pipeline system while our state policy requires a massive reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is a conflict and will

² <https://www.biogeosciences.net/16/3033/2019/>

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https://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/climatechange/gc3/gc3_12_13_2018/draft_gc3_ghg_reduction_recommendations.pdf



potentially leave ratepayers on the hook with a stranded asset. We ask that you require PURA to open a docket that investigates and plans for the future of the gas system in relation to the greenhouse gas reduction goals in the GWSA, identifies how and where repair fits into that future, and investigates alternatives like district heating systems and RTTs. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee to address this concern.

HB 5351 An Act Concerning Certain Programs and to Incentive and Implement Electric Energy Storage Resources

Sierra Club Connecticut supports House Bill 5351 to procure up to 1,000 MW of energy storage. As noted above, energy storage is an essential component of our clean energy future.

HB 5008 An Act Concerning the Establishment of High Performance Green Buildings Standards for Voluntary Adoption by Municipalities

Sierra Club Connecticut supports House Bill 5008. Giving municipalities the ability to voluntarily implement stretch building codes developed by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is an important policy that will improve building efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions here in Connecticut. Stretch energy codes are a voluntary appendix to a mandatory statewide minimum energy code that allows municipalities to adopt a uniform beyond code option to achieve greater levels of energy efficiency.⁴ At this time, 25-30% of the energy used in the United States is lost due to inefficient and wasteful practices.⁵ Contributing to this energy loss is improperly insulated walls, roofs, windows, and inefficient appliances. This is both a colossal waste of money and causes us to burn more fossil fuels, contributing even more to the climate crisis. We need to use all the tools we can to reduce this waste and create the most efficient buildings we can.

Being as efficient as possible in our buildings is the first step meeting our greenhouse gas reduction goals and in achieving a clean and renewable energy future. In order to be able to power our grid with renewable sources, we have to be able to reduce demand on the grid, namely through being more energy efficient.

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<https://www.metalarchitecture.com/articles/increasing-energy-efficiency-in-buildings-with-stretch-and-react-h-codes>

⁵ <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/what-uses-the-most-energy-home/>



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This bill will allow Connecticut's one hundred and sixty nine towns to voluntarily adopt stretch building codes that will save money, reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and move as quickly as they want to a clean energy future.

The adoption of stretch codes has been successful in the state of Massachusetts since its inception in 2008. At this time, 278 cities and towns in Massachusetts have adopted stretch codes.⁶ This puts Massachusetts far ahead of us on both reducing energy loss, saving money, and moving toward our future of 100% clean and renewable energy. New York and Rhode Island have adopted similar measures as well.

The benefits of stretch code also reach beyond the obvious benefits of reducing energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions. They are also beneficial to the construction industry. Often state base codes are not keeping up with advances in technology and design practices; stretch codes can provide an opportunity to train the building and development communities in advanced practices and help accelerate market acceptance and adoption of more stringent energy efficiency codes in the future. This can be a path to a booming, innovative construction industry that will create good, high paying jobs and will be prepared for future changes to the state code.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues and consideration of our testimony.

Samantha Dynowski, State Director and Ann Gadwah, Chapter Chair
Sierra Club Connecticut

⁶ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/stretch-code-adoption-by-community-map/download>