

# Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5352

AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGIES AT PUBLIC

**Title:** INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

**Vote Date:** 3/10/2020

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/5/2020

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill requires the BOR and UConn BOT to annually develop and update a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at each public higher education institution by 45% by January 1, 2030, and by 100% by January 1, 2050, with the intent of mitigating the effects of greenhouse gas emissions on our climate. The substitute bill adds language mandating that greenhouse gas emissions on public higher education institutions be reduced by 100% by January 1, 2050, and replaces language requiring presidents, instead of governing boards, to report on such reduction plans.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

**Mark Ojikian, President, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities:** President Ojikian writes that CSCU has been aggressively pursuing projects that address climate change and move toward green energy on all campuses. He notes that nine of the CSCU campuses have solar cells and that 30% of the energy used across those campuses is solar generated, which saves the CSCU system money because it is less expensive than buying from the utility company. He asks the legislature to use a base year to start the analysis of 2012 to allow CSCU to highlight its current work to reduce greenhouse emissions. He also requests that this bill include language to fund a CSCU System energy manager to oversee such efforts.

**Scott Jordan, Chief Financial Officer, University of Connecticut:** Mr. Jordan writes that UConn leads by example in working to reduce greenhouse emissions and is often a first adopter of innovative policy and technology. He notes that UConn developed a Climate Action Plan (CAP for short) and proposed nearly 200 actions for reducing greenhouse emissions. He also notes that UConn is already ultimately committed to achieving carbon

neutrality by 2050 by virtue of being a signatory to the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment since 2008.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Chadwick Schroeder, UConnPIRG](#): Mr. Schroeder submitted testimony in support of the bill with some language change suggestions. He cites the UN as declaring that human society has only 10 years to reach net zero emissions to have a chance at preventing the global average temperature from increasing by 2 degrees Celsius. He further states that there is not enough time for inaction and suggests that the timeline in the bill be shortened due to the urgency of the climate crisis human society faces.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Justin Boutin, Assistant Clerk**

**Date: March 11, 2020**