

Testimony of the Connecticut Audubon Society to the Environment Committee  
of the Connecticut General Assembly in strong support of HB 6441,  
An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation

March 7, 2021



The Connecticut Audubon Society thanks the Committee and the sponsors of **HB 6441, An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation** for proposing this important resolution and for the opportunity to express our strong support. This proposal is a key part of the implementation plan for the Governor's Council on Climate Change. Climate change is an over-arching threat to the wildlife and people of Connecticut and we applaud you for proposing this important measure. Of particular importance is section 3, which would enable municipalities to opt into a program to establish a funding source for climate resilience projects including land acquisition and stewardship. These activities are critical for the preservation of the quality of life within our communities and the state and this proposal will provide another important tool for the conservation toolbox.

We have consistently supported efforts by the General Assembly to increase the pace of land conservation in Connecticut, and we note that the state is still significantly behind in our goal to have 21% of the state's land protected by this year. Land preservation on a significant scale requires consistent funding and passage of this act will help municipalities to be even more effective partners in the conservation and management of key habitats and open space in Connecticut. Similar programs have been immensely effective in New York, Massachusetts and other states.

A critical aspect of this bill is the provision that would allow funding to be utilized for activities beyond acquisition alone. It is a common misconception that once land is protected the job is done. Preserved land requires stewardship, including habitat management and restoration, successional management and invasive species monitoring and remediation. Certain parcels may also require specific stewardship actions targeting individual species or groups of species, e.g. predator enclosure cages for Piping Plover nests or psychological string-fencing for other beach nesting birds. The funds provided through this program would allow the participating municipalities to enact such needed efforts on existing open space, activities which are normally difficult to fund through existing funding sources.



Patrick M. Comins  
Executive Director

*Founded in 1898, the Connecticut Audubon Society is an independent organization that conserves Connecticut's environment through science-based education and advocacy focused on the state's bird populations and habitats. We own and manage 20 preserves covering almost 3,300 acres in all areas of the state, and we work with landowners to help them manage their land for the benefit of birds and other wildlife.*