



Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District, Inc.

Environment Committee Public Hearing – March 3, 2021
Testimony in Support of Soil Health Sections 3, 4, and 5
HB 6496 – AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN SOIL-RELATED INITIATIVES

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 6496 – An Act Concerning Soil-Related Initiatives, specifically the sections focused on soil health (3, 4 and 5).

The CT River Coastal Conservation District is one of the state's five soil and water conservation districts, working to promote the sound use of our natural resources through technical assistance and education. Soil is a critical resource that we work to protect through our technical services, and many other programs.

We support the testimony provided by the CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation, and provide the following additional comments.

Sections 3, 4 and 5 are important because they update the Soil Conservation section of the CT General Statutes to include soil health, a resource concern that CT's Conservation Districts are already working on.

Soil Health is defined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service as "the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans." Soil Health is critical to climate change mitigation, adaptation and resiliency; clean water; an abundant and healthy food supply; food security; and food justice.

One example of soil health related work of CT's Conservation Districts, including our district that covers the lower CT River watershed, is to provide assistance to farms with planning and implementing more sustainable agricultural practices. These practices help restore soil health by increasing its carbon content, which improves productivity and captures carbon from the atmosphere, helping to combat climate change. Healthy soils result in improved soil resiliency, making it better able to withstand the climate change impacts of flooding and drought; reduced erosion and runoff, improving water quality and protecting water supplies; and reduced need for pesticides, fertilizers, and irrigation. Other outcomes include enhanced food security and access to local foods due to improved productivity, important to food justice.

We thank you for raising this bill, and for your consideration of our comments.

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