

Dear Co-Chairs Christine Cohen and Joseph Gresko, Vice-Chairs Christine Palm and Derek Slap, Ranking Members Craig Miner and Stephen Harding, and Members of the Environment Committee,

My name is Maria Cecilia Pinto de Moura and I am a Senior Vehicles Engineer with the Clean Transportation program at the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). UCS is a national non-profit organization that puts, rigorous, independent science to work to solve some of our planet's most pressing problems.

Today I am testifying in strong support for Connecticut Senate Bill 884, *An Act Reducing Transportation-Related Carbon Emissions*. This bill is a critical step in the right direction as Connecticut has the opportunity to participate in the Transportation and Climate Initiative Program (TCI-P) and continue to make progress towards an equitable and clean transportation system.

TCI-P is regional, bi-partisan policy opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars, trucks and buses. *But it is also an opportunity to reduce emissions of toxic substances from vehicle tailpipes.* Actions to reduce greenhouse gases have direct co-benefits for local air quality and for human health. The burning of fossil fuels is a major source of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), miniscule particles that are a serious health risk for human beings. According to a [recent study](#) from Harvard and three British universities, exposure to PM_{2.5} from fossil fuels was responsible for over 8 million premature avoidable deaths in the world in just one year, 2018 – that's almost one out of five global deaths.

Researchers from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health estimated that there will be significant health benefits from TCI-P in Connecticut. They estimated the deaths avoided from improvements in air quality and active mobility, and from improvements made possible by the electrification of vehicles and the expansion of transit, and biking and pedestrian infrastructure; they estimated avoided respiratory hospitalizations, and childhood asthma incidences. In the year 2032, [the health savings](#) range from an annual \$270 million to \$360 million for the state, depending on the suite of policies implemented, possibly reaching as high as \$690 million. Note that these health savings are avoided expenditures in addition to the proceeds TCI-P will bring from the allowance auctions. *These benefits will directly impact Connecticut residents, particularly in underserved and overburdened communities, as people breathe cleaner air and suffer fewer negative health impacts.*

The exposure to PM_{2.5} from on-road vehicles is highly inequitable. The highest exposures occur near highways and freight hubs, and in underserved and overburdened communities due to a long history of misguided decisions and policies such as redlining. At UCS, we quantified this inequity: [we estimated the exposure of PM_{2.5} from on-road vehicles](#) and identified the most exposed populations. *In Connecticut, the average concentration of exposure for Latino residents is 27 percent higher than it is for white residents. For African American residents, the exposure is 30 percent higher than it is for white residents.*

TCI-P is one way to start to address this unfair and inequitable exposure to PM_{2.5}. For this to become a reality, however, a significant share of the proceeds of the program must be dedicated to underserved and overburdened communities. The Draft Model Rule defines a **minimum** of 35% of TCI-P proceeds be dedicated to investments that benefit underserved and overburdened communities, *but this share is not sufficient, and should be higher than the communities' share of the total Connecticut population. I strongly urge strengthening SB 884 by increasing this share significantly.* I would like to note that in Massachusetts, [a bill has been introduced](#) that would set this share to 70% - *twice* as much as the minimum. There are strong examples from California and other places that demonstrate how projects can easily reach this high of a percentage.

There is broad support in Connecticut for TCI-P. A [survey](#) conducted by Climate Nexus and the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication found that 67% of respondents in Connecticut support their state's participation in the program. The survey also demonstrated broad support for directing program proceeds to a variety of projects that benefit underserved and overburdened communities, from improving the reliability of public transit, adding new bus routes and train lines in locations that don't currently have access to public transit, improving walkability, expanding high speed communications to rural communities, electrifying buses, providing consumer rebates and incentives to purchase cleaner fuel vehicles like electric vehicles (EVs), and road and bridge maintenance.

By being one of the first four signatories of TCI-P, Connecticut has demonstrated its leadership in the region. The state now has the opportunity to continue to show this leadership by strengthening and passing SB 884 and prioritizing the voices and needs of disproportionately burdened communities. A TCI-P that is consistent with equity principles, along with additional policies, can continue to lead the region's economy, its climate mitigation, its public health, and its transportation system in the right direction.

I strongly support SB 884 and urge you to vote in favor.

Thank you for your leadership in this critical effort.

Sincerely,

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