



SIERRA CLUB

Connecticut Chapter
P.O. Box 270595
West Hartford, Connecticut 06127
connecticut.sierraclub.org

Dear Representative Lemar, Senator Cassano, Representative Simms, Senator Somers, Representative Carney and members of the Transportation 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 several issues before you today.

The Sierra Club is committed to solving the climate crisis we face with just and equitable solutions that will result in a healthy world for everyone.

Transportation pollution in Connecticut is a serious problem for public health and our climate. According to the latest greenhouse gas inventory¹ from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the transportation sector accounts for 38% of greenhouse gas emissions in the state contributing to the climate crisis. Poor air quality is contributing to a health crisis disproportionately impacting Black, Brown and low income communities with acute and chronic respiratory problems such as asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, and other lung diseases. In fact, a recent study found that 18% of premature deaths were a direct consequence of burning fossil fuels, and that the Northeastern United States is one of the hardest hit areas in the world.²

We seek solutions to these issues that include clean, pollution-free vehicles and making our communities more walkable, bikeable and transit-friendly. Sierra Club is testifying in support of three bills to promote clean transportation before you today: HB 5419, HB 5423, and SB 127.

House Bill 5419 - An Act Concerning the Federal Clean Air Act Fee on Motor Vehicle Registrations

Sierra Club supports HB 5419. Revenues collected for clean air, greenhouse gas reduction and other environmental purposes should be used as intended on clean transportation initiatives. There is no shortage of possible investments, including:

- Bus system improvements such as bus system redesign to meet the needs of communities, expanding CTFAstrak, bus and depot electrification;
- Vehicle electrification investments for medium and heavy duty trucks, electric charging at ports that serve heavy duty trucks, and for light-duty electric vehicles to meet the state's electric vehicle goal of 150,000 vehicles in 2025. Investments could also support the growth of electric bicycles, or e-bikes.
- Bicycle and pedestrian investments such as bike lanes and improved pedestrian crossings.

House Bill 5423 - An Act Concerning the Expansion of Passenger Train and Ground Transportation Services in Eastern Connecticut

Sierra Club supports HB 5423. Rail transportation is significantly more energy efficient (freight rail is 2/3 more efficient than trucks), reduces carbon and air pollution from automobiles and trucks, traffic

¹ https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/2017_GHG_Inventory/2017_GHG_Inventory.pdf

² <https://www.seas.harvard.edu/news/2021/02/deaths-fossil-fuel-emissions-higher-previously-thought>

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congestion, wear and tear on roads and bridges, and makes our neighborhoods safer for pedestrians and cyclists, while creating jobs and helping to revitalize town centers and reduce poorly-planned sprawling development. As eastern Connecticut experiences economic and population growth, and for travelers commuting between New York, Rhode Island and points north, rail expansion is an important part of a clean transportation strategy.

Senate Bill 127 - An Act Concerning the Sale of Electric Vehicles in the State

Sierra Club supports SB 127 to permit electric vehicle manufacturers to sell electric vehicles directly to the consumer. Connecticut's Global Warming Solutions Act 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. 2019 modeling by the Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) shows that to meet this economy-wide 2030 greenhouse gas reduction target, emissions from the transportation sector must be reduced 29 percent from 2014 levels; this is the equivalent of 500,000 electric passenger vehicles on the road by 2030. Direct sale of electric vehicles by manufacturers is an important strategy to accelerate the adoption of zero emission vehicles to meet these goals.

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

Sincerely,

Samantha Dynowski
Sierra Club Connecticut