

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6397

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING ZERO-CARBON EMISSIONS.

Vote Date: 3/10/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/15/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

To reach the state's carbon-reduction goals thru policies and accountability.

JFS Language:

Added requirement re zero-carbon roadmap for GHG reduction goals of the state. Remove requirements concerning duties of the Secretary of the Office of Policy Management and the State Treasurer. Added provisions regarding section 1 a not providing executive order authority to the Governor.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Erick Russell, Treasurer, State of Connecticut:

Climate and its impact on the planet are most consequential but my concerns are with the requirement that the state divest from companies that derive more than 10% of its revenues from the sale of fossil fuels by October 1, 2023. I am committed to utilizing every tool to reach our shared goals but rushing this decision runs counter to my role as sole fiduciary of the State's pension and trust funds.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Paul Aresta, Executive Director, Council on Environmental Quality:

The Council supports certain provisions of the bill such as leveraging federal funding to achieve affordable zero-carbon electricity generation that would provide economic development opportunities and training for clean energy jobs. Carbon dioxide emissions increased in 2018 and the state is not on track to achieve the 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal.

Bobby Callagy:

As a student and a 16-year-old climate activist we are not the only victims of climate change. We the 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 to 24 are agents of change and this bill is a step forward. As a society it is imperative that we come together to take tangible steps forward when our coastlines are flooding, and lives are at risk.

Jessica Wolf, Stratford:

As a founding member of the District 4 Citizens Climate Lobby Chapter, we support the bill and the declaration of a climate emergency and it's addressing the numerous aspects of climate action.

Nathan Frohling, Director of External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy:

On behalf of the Nature Conservancy this bill is big, bold and a multi-faceted climate bill for Connecticut to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. The bill makes it clear that we are in a climate emergency and lays out important measures for obtaining and utilizing federal funding for climate action.

Joan Nichols, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association:

Climate change is directly impacting farm production, farm profitability and farm resources for Connecticut farmers. We suggest that the Department of Agriculture, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and UConn Health, Agriculture and Natural resources be added to this bill. We have included some amendments to include these departments.

Aziz Dehkan, Executive Director, CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs:

The bill declares a climate emergency and outlines the steps to address this crisis. Connecticut is leaving federal money on the table thru the Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act. The bill could build our green workforce through job-ready training in high school, college and trade students in the renewable energy industry.

Chelsea Gazillo, New England Policy Manager, American Farmland Trust:

The bill does fail to recognize our agricultural sector and the working lands that are a key component to the state's efforts to combat climate change. We recommend in an amendment that the following be added to the bill, Connecticut Department of Agriculture, The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension and Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.

Charles Rothenberger, Climate & Energy Attorney, Save the Sound:

Though Save the Sounds supports the bill we have included additional language on updating GHG emission, state agency accountability, enforceability of the Global warming Solutions Act, authority to adopt policies and regulations by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and a decarbonization roadmap. New York, Vermont, Massachusetts and Rhode Island have taken steps to strengthen their climate legislation.

Jason Hine, The Ditty Bag:

Mr. Hine gave up his teaching job to open a zero-waste market and café and now helps people live more sustainably and fight climate change. We are currently not on target to meet our goals to curb emissions.

Tanya Wiedeking:

The law must be improved by establishing state agency accountability, enforcing the GWSA compliance, expanding state agency authority to adopt policies and regulations, establish a Connecticut decarbonization road map and updating targets to reflect emissions limits.

Caroline Dumont M.D:

As a mother of three and psychiatrist we need to address those individuals in Connecticut whose mental health has been impacted by our current climate crisis. The stressors that come with climate impacts degrade our mental health and wellbeing as well as undermine the social infrastructure that are the foundations of our communities.

Mark Favreau, Citizen's Climate Lobby:

To ensure climate accountability we must improve this bill by adding a state agency accountability, enforcement of GWSA compliance, expand the authority for state agencies to adopt policies and regulations, establish a decarbonization roadmap and update targets to reflect the emissions limits.

Peter J. Auster, Senior Research Scientist, Mystic Aquarium:

We have for too long been treating the problems as business as usual. It is hard to see the immediate linkages however if we don't reduce greenhouse gasses, the principal causes of global warming, sea level rise, storms, droughts and ocean acidification we will suffer greater effects due to delays.

Lori Brown, Executive Director, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters:

There were detailed provisions that her organization recommended.

The CTLCV suggested the following:

Update Emission Reduction Targets, Require consideration of climate impacts for agency action, Ensure compliance with the Global Warming Solutions Act, Complete a Connecticut decarbonization roadmap, and Establish needed regulatory authority for state agencies to meet our climate targets.

Ann Gadwah, Outreach Organizer, Sierra Club Connecticut:

Ms. Gadwah gave some recommendations to strengthen the bill and give the state the tools to meet our carbon reduction goals. We recommend updating the emissions targeted, include requiring consideration of climate impacts, enforce compliance with GWSA requirements, give state agencies the authority needed and have a Connecticut Decarbonization Roadmap.

Roger Kuhns, State Coordinator, Connecticut Citizens' Climate:

Having worked on the science and policy of climate change for two decades as a geologist, climate researcher and environmental justice practitioner we must act more decisively and quickly to stem the increasing costly impacts from climate change.

Ana McMonigle, Staff Attorney, Conservation Law Foundation:

Ms. McMonigle submitted testimony on the negative impact and how global warming would reach 1.5degrees Celsius before 2040 causing multiple climate hazards. North America has been a top contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions. We have included proposed language for making the bill better.

Robert LaFrance, Director of Policy, Ct National Audubon Society:

I agreed with the testimony of Denise Savageau and that the bill does not address the need for adaption and resilient in an emergency and it does not recognize the role of natural and workings in mitigating for greenhouse gas and adapting to climate change.

Denise Savageau Chair, Ct Council on Soil & Water Conservation:

On behalf of the Connecticut Council on Soil & Water Conservation and the short falls on two accounts: 1) the need for adaptation/ resiliency in the face of climate emergency, and 2) not recognizing the roll of the natural and working lands in both mitigating for greenhouse gasses and adapting to climate change.

Amy Blaymore Patterson, Executive Director, Connecticut Land Conservation Council:

The bill fails to include specific actions related to climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation and recognizing the essential role that nature-based climate solutions play in meeting our targets for carbon neutrality.

Mark Scully, President, People's Action for Clean Energy (PACE):

Mr. Scully submitted testimony on how to further the bill provisions and mechanisms to ensure compliance on the targets to reduce our carbon emissions.

Rick Newton:

Mr. Newton submitted testimony on what the twenty-two towns in the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments have done about climate change. Via a Resolution No 21-3 approved on May 24, 2021, they declared a Climate Emergency. Most towns lack the resources both financial and human to effectively take action. We need the state to declare a climate emergency and obtain federal funding and other resources to help the 169 towns in Connecticut.

Tom Swan, Executive Director, Connecticut Citizen Action Group:

Mr. Swan testified in detail on section m. Efforts to have Connecticut divest from fossil fuels is endorsed by the SEBAC leadership. The state Treasurer as sole fiduciary for the state and teachers pension funds but the legislature has been known to set policies to guide the Treasurer. We are concerned that the timeline may be a little more aggressive than prudent and there needs to be work on the definition for companies to be divested from.

Sixteen people submitted testimony:

Connecticut is in a climate emergency, and I support the measure in the bill we must improve the law by establishing a state agency for meeting the greenhouse gas reduction targets, providing for the enforcement of GWSA compliance, expanding the authority for state agencies, establishing a Connecticut decarbonization roadmap and updating targets to reflect the emissions limits.

Nineteen people also submitted testimony in support:

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Stephen Rosentel, President Leahy's Fuels:

Having personally been involved for 35 years with legislation this bill is terrible public policy. I have included in my testimony specific sections and specific reasons not to move this bill forward.

Christian Herb, President, Connecticut Energy Market Association:

The bill fails to address electric reliability issues and does not allow for fuel diversity such as biodiesel, renewal diesel, and renewable propane.

Ashley Zane, Government Affairs Associate: Connecticut Business Industry Association:

Ms. Zane submitted testimony in partial opposition regarding subsection (m) requiring the Comptroller to divest from fossil fuel companies no later than October 1, 2023. ADEC payments demand highly on market performance and limiting what the state can invest in will not help continue the progress made regarding paying down the state's commitments.

Leslie Anderson, President and CEO, the Propane Gas Association of New England:

The bill seeks to promote electricity at the expense of propane. It does not advance economic security or climate objectives. Propane systems are more efficient and less costly to consumers. Amend this bill to include propane and alternative fuels.

Michael Giamo, Director, Northeast Region American Petroleum Institute:

Natural Gas and the Oil Industry are part of the climate solution. Natural Gas and Oil will be a vital part of everyday life. We share in the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and we choose to stay invested working with companies on the shared goal to reduce emissions.

Kim Libera, Earth Scientist:

Ms. Libera testified that she is skeptical of the bill and its real motives. We already have regulations on the books and with agencies that deal with pollution. This is masquerading as the climate policy so that government appointed agents will usurp the likes of gas stoves, grills, fireplaces and furnaces.

Jim. Perras, CEO: Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut:

Even though the Home Builders & Remodelers agree with the premise the potential impacts on housing accessibility is great. We have included thirteen suggestions to better balance the bill.

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: March 17, 2023