



TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT** of **SB 419** and **HB 5454**  
AN ACT CONCERNING VEGETATION MANAGEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION  
AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION'S VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

March 10, 2020

**To:** Honored Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Demicco and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

**From:** Megan Macomber, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **IN SUPPORT of SB 419** to address vegetation management by the Department of Transportation and **HB 5454** to establish a taskforce to study the Department of Transportation's Vegetation Management Program.

Connecticut has a long history of protecting its diverse array of plant and animal species, yet every year, the Department of Transportation commissions large scale tree cutting projects along state highways. These trees provide habitats for birds and wildlife and sequester carbon from the air along highways where emissions are especially high.

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, the earth is currently experiencing its 6<sup>th</sup> mass extinction, with as many as 1 million species at risk of going extinct in coming decades.

**Connecticut, alone, has 23 species of animals and 133 species of plants listed as endangered and at risk of going extinct.**

Habitat loss is the primary driver of extinction worldwide, and our public land should be a role model of thoughtful stewardship. Preserving trees not only protects habitat for our state's plants and animals, but also contributes to climate change mitigation efforts, enhances property values, reduces erosion, and improves air quality. Therefore, any tree removal project should be subject to thorough review prior to implementation.

CTLCV urges the committee to **SUPPORT SB 419 and HB 5454** in order to better protect plant and animal species and their habitats in Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration as you deliberate on this bill.

Sincerely,

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