Connecticut League of Conservation Voters
118 Oak Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
About the Scorecard

The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters proudly presents its first Environmental Scorecard. It reflects input from our diverse Board of Directors and our Executive Director, along with input from a broad array of environmental organizations in Connecticut. Our newly formed organization kicked off its activities at the State Capital in January 2000. We announced our goals and first year agenda, and we identified many of the issues that we would be tracking. During this very short eight week session we distributed eight scorecard alerts to let legislators know which bills we felt were important. Some issues were added as the session progressed. This scorecard summarizes our findings.

The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Working in concert with Connecticut’s environmental community, the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV) protects the environment by helping to elect environmentally responsible candidates to state and local office, then holding them accountable to the environmental agenda.

CTLCV conducts rigorous research on candidates. We back our endorsements with expertise, assisting candidates with media, fundraising and grassroots organizing strategies they need to win. We work to educate voters, then help get out the vote on election day.

CTLCV is also a legislative watchdog. Each year, we will track environmental bills and votes in Connecticut’s General Assembly and work to make sure legislators hear from environmental voters. At the end of every session, we will publish the Connecticut Environmental Scorecard to help voters distinguish between the rhetoric and the reality of a lawmaker’s record.

A Message from the Co-Chairs…

During the 2000 session of the General Assembly, the Connecticut environmental community helped CTLCV identify and track environmental legislation. Members of the House and Senate were notified of these bills at the beginning of the session and through regular CTLCV “Scorecard Alerts.”

Our intention was to be able to inform voters how their elected representatives acted on these issues so that their performance could be “scored” and they could be measured not by what they choose to say to voters but by what they actually did in the legislature.

Our attempt to present to you a complete environmental scorecard for 2000 has led us to an unanticipated outcome. We do not mean to suggest that the votes reflected in the scorecard are not worthy of scrutiny or praise. They should provide important guides to voters. But perhaps the most meaningful point is that there are so few votes, and most did not result in pro-environment legislation. Does this reflect the importance your legislator attaches to your health and environment?

Closed-door caucuses, recommitals, last minute substantive changes to bills, hearings on “subject matter” rather than actual language, and voice votes—often make it impossible to put the responsibility for failure or success at the feet of the appropriate legislator.

Leaders and legislators who do not try to change these practices must share responsibility for their continuance. Taxpayers who pay $44 million annually to maintain the Connecticut General Assembly imagine that they are funding an open, accessible and accountable process, and this is sadly not the case.

Our Board members have broad experience in legislative affairs—five of them are former legislators. We know that change must occur if we are to retain the gains we achieved in the past and meet new challenges to protect our state’s environment from harm. New stewards and new forms of stewardship are called for. The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters is proud to join the many organizations and individuals who continue to be involved in this great task.

A important form of stewardship occurs in the voting both. The purpose of this Scorecard is to inform voters so that they may act responsibly. We encourage you to use this information and let your voices be heard!

Julie Belaga Co-Chair
Russ Brenneman Co-Chair
Environmental Bills—Why They Were Counted

/ HB 5173 WORKING LANDS

Connecticut’s farmland is vanishing at an alarming rate. With hundreds of farms currently on the market, it is estimated that sprawling development will consume all of Connecticut’s remaining farmland in 50 years. The “working lands” proposal introduced by Planning and Development Chair Jeff Davis would have helped the state use its unspent $6.1 million, and authorize an additional $10 million in a lump sum that would ensure swift action when farms go on the market.

Rep. Bill Belden’s amendment in the Finance Committee weakened the bill by removing the lump sum funding provision. This resulted in two separate scorecard votes for that committee.

Pro-Environment Vote: NO to the amendment, YES to the bill  
Senate Action: None  
House Action: None

/ HB 5264 SMART GROWTH

Connecticut lags behind other states in developing a comprehensive policy on sprawl—affecting almost every aspect of the environmental protection of land, air and water. Planning and Development Committee Chair Jeff Davis introduced a bill to establish a blue ribbon commission to study “smart growth” and make policy recommendations. Despite volumes of public testimony in support of this long overdue initiative, including written support from Senate leadership, the House leadership refused to put the bill on the Calendar and recommitted it to committee with no explanation.

Pro-Environment Vote: YES  
Senate Action: None  
House Action: None

/ HB 5583 MINIMIZING AIR POLLUTION FROM POWER PLANTS

This legislation would have required Connecticut’s five worst polluting power plants to meet modern standards for levels of Nitrogen Oxides and Sulfur Dioxide emissions. Advocates for the legislation garnered bi-partisan support from 118 co-sponsors, but an eleventh-hour amendment in the House weakened the legislation.

Efforts to put the bill back on track fell apart in the Senate after legislators voted to restore the stronger standards, then immediately repealed the amendment and added unacceptable provisions. Supporters of the stronger standards withdrew the legislation fearing the bill would only make cleanup more difficult.

Pro-Environment Vote: YES, with no amendments  
Senate Action: Passed with Senate Amendment B  
House Action: Passed with House Amendment A
4 HB 5582 ANNUAL TESTING OF SEWAGE SLUDGE INCINERATORS

Rep. Jim O’Rourke’s bill to reduce mercury pollution from incinerators that burn sewage sludge was allowed to die on the House Calendar. The bill, which passed almost unanimously through three committees early in the session, would have required operators of these incinerators to conduct tests on a more rigorous timeline for mercury, metals and hydrocarbons in air emissions.

Pro-Environment Vote: YES
Senate Action: None
House Action: None

5 HB 5883 OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND

At the beginning of the session legislative leaders proposed using $50 million of the state operating budget surplus to create a new Charter Oak Open Space Trust Fund. By session’s end, the newly created fund was reduced to $10 million. Strong Water company lands protections were written into the bill.

Pro-Environment Vote: YES
Senate Action: Passed
House Action: Passed

6 SB 383 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The statewide Solid Waste Management Plan was established to help Connecticut reduce the amount of solid waste generated annually. The DEP is charged with implementing the plan, and may require municipalities and the CRRA (Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority) to comply with the plan.

This bill would have made the Solid Waste Management Plan a “regulation,” creating unneeded delays in its implementation. Rep. Jim O’Rourke successfully blocked the bill by filing amendments that would not have been supported by proponents of the bill, including an incinerator moratorium and expanded recycling. As a result, the bill died on the House calendar.

Pro-Environment Vote: NO
Senate Action: Passed
House Action: None

7 SB 439 STATE PURCHASE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PRODUCTS

This non-controversial bill would have set a comprehensive policy for the state to purchase environmentally preferable products, services and practices. It would have increased the post-consumer content of recycled paper used by the state from ten to thirty percent and would require the state to adopt federal standards for the purchase and use of the state motor vehicle fleet. The bill was amended in the Senate to include some reporting requirements, but died on the House calendar.

Pro-Environment Vote: YES
Senate Action: Passed
House Action: None

8 SB 504 WATER PLANNING COUNCIL

This bill would have established a process to look at key water-related issues including water allocation, diversion, open space, and water rates, and would have created a task force of all the major players. The budget failed to include $100,000 to establish the Water Planning Council and the bill subsequently died on the Senate Calendar.

Pro-Environment Vote: YES
Senate Action: None
House Action: None

9 AMENDMENT TO SB 640 ADRIAEN’S LANDING RESTORING CEPA

Despite protests from the environmental community, the bill which approved $771 million in funding for the Adriaen’s Landing project also includes exemptions from two core environmental laws, Connecticut’s Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) and Connecticut’s Environmental Protection Act. An amendment offered by Rep. Jessie Stratton to restore the normal environmental review process was soundly defeated 114 to 36 in the House in one of the only environmental roll call votes this session.

Pro-Environment Vote: YES
House Action: Failed
Senate Action: None

Noteworthy Bills That Were Not Scored

—A backdoor attack on Connecticut’s wildlife statues was thwarted when the House stripped an amendment that would allow the taking of raptors from the wild to use for the purpose of falconry. This significant change was added by Senator Adela Eads during the final weeks of session, and had not received a public hearing. No individual votes on this amendment were recorded.

—A provision was added to the Urban Harbors bill by Environment Committee Chair Senator Eileen Daily that would have weakened environmental standards for emergency dredging of Clinton Harbor. The bill also directed the DEP Commissioner to issue the dredging permit. The provision about dredging standards was removed in the House, but not the improper directive to the DEP Commissioner. No individual votes on these amendments were recorded in either chamber.

—Rep. Mary Mushinsky successfully added a pro-environment amendment to the same Urban Harbors bill to require the South Central Regional Water Authority to protect the environmental quality of Lake Whitney and the Mill River Corridor. There were no recorded votes on the amendment in either Chamber.
An attempt was made to vastly expand a pilot program that rewards businesses with exemplary environmental track records before the program was fully set up or tested. This bill, introduced by the Environment Committee, which would have extended the same benefits to poor performers participating in the voluntary audit program, raised serious questions about possible environmental impacts.

The Environment Committee introduced a bill to give the University of Connecticut special treatment under Connecticut’s Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). Rather than vote on the bill, the Environment Committee substantially changed it in private Caucus, and then voted for the changed bill without further public input. This all-too-common practice is a clear example of the need for better public access as decisions are being made.

**Scoring**

Votes for the environment are designated with a one (1) and votes against the environment are designated with a zero (0).

Absences can help or hurt a bill. Because not voting is sometimes deliberate and often a decisive factor, absences and abstentions are included in the scoring if the vote was anything but unanimous. Scored absences are marked with an A and unscored absences are marked with an a.

CTLCV is also scoring committee votes. Each committee vote counts exactly the same as a floor vote. Not all legislators serve on committees that vote on environmental legislation. Each legislator is assigned a percentage score based on his or her total number of floor and committee votes. A perfect score is 100%.

Unless otherwise noted, the “Pro-Environment Vote” in the bill summaries refers to House and Senate votes.

### Key

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Scorecards do not reflect some important, but less tangible, elements of legislative work, such as when a legislator actively “works” a bill by helping to build support for its passage.

— Reps. Moira Lyons, Ken Bernhard and John Stripp, and Sens. George Jepsen, Bill Nickerson, and Judy Freedman led the effort to pass the Open Space bill.


— Rep. Jeff Davis’ efforts to bring the issue of sprawl to the forefront were an important step towards responsible planning.

— Rep. Mary Mushinsky worked for better protections of Lake Whitney and Mill River corridor.

**Senate Average** 68%  
**House Average** 65%

**100% Score:**  