



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF **HB 5002**
AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN NEW DEAL

February 20, 2019

To: Honorable Chairs Sen. Needleman and Rep. Arconti and Distinguished Members of the Energy and Technology Committee

From: Lori Brown, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV)

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **IN SUPPORT OF HB 5002**, An Act Concerning the Development of a Green New Deal.

Climate change is **THE** issue facing our generation, and its impacts are already being felt. From raging wildfires and vicious hurricanes to torrential rains and unprecedented droughts, extreme weather is only going to get worse across the globe and right here in Connecticut. We risk **billions of dollars in damage to our shoreline, infrastructure, public health, agriculture, and more if we do not take bold action.**

While climate change affects us all, it does not affect us all equally. The most vulnerable among us in low-income households and communities of color already grapple with some of the worst pollution and public health crises. Climate change magnifies these injustices and exposes working families to new threats from severe storms, record-shattering temperatures, flooding, and more. **Any attempt to address climate change must also address its disproportionate impact on low-income households and communities of color.**

The Green New Deal can offer a vision for a brighter, healthier future for ALL of us by adhering to a few critical guiding principles:

- **Community Inclusion:** Any policies developed on climate change, such as implementing climate resiliency adaptations must take into account the needs of **ALL** the communities directly impacted.
- **Lower Emissions:** Connecticut approved ambitious reduction in its carbon footprint and must act decisively now to meet those goals, and transition to 100% fossil-free clean energy by date certain.
- **Green Collar Jobs:** Smart investment in green initiatives can create public and private job growth as well as generate cost savings that lead to economic stimulus.
- **A Just Transition:** The right green policies can level the playing field in Connecticut. Displaced workers must be given access to training and new opportunities in the green

economy, and policies like energy efficiency standards should impact small businesses and big corporations equally—and enable everyone to thrive.

For the sake of our future, **we must transition away from fossil fuels and to 100% clean, renewable energy.** This will require a Green New Deal which not only outlines a clear vision for the future, but also contains concrete policies concerning **energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainability, and resiliency.**

The Green New Deal should be a blueprint to stimulate the economy, tackle climate change, and promote racial and social equality at the same time.

These are some of the broad topics which could include a myriad of programs and policies, including but not limited to:

- Strict energy efficiency standards for buildings to reduce emissions and save costs;
- A “Green Jobs Ladder” or similar workforce development plan with an emphasis on training low-income and working-class residents;
- Creating a Residential Property Assessed Clean Energy (R-PACE) program to help low-income households finance energy efficient improvements;
- Protecting energy efficiency funds from diversion;
- A mandate that every action Connecticut’s regulatory agencies take should work to reduce the state’s carbon footprint;
- Increasing the urgency of Connecticut’s Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS);
- A significantly higher offshore wind procurement target;
- An increased community solar allowance;
- Equitable net-metering to incentivize Connecticut residents and businesses to install solar panels;
- Electrified mass transit;
- Bans on new natural gas, coal, oil or other fossil fuel or oil infrastructure development;
- An emphasis on land conservation in order to sequester carbon;
- Increased access to compost to reduce methane leakage from landfills;
- Emphasis on the role of mini-grids and smart grids in an increasingly decentralized power distribution structure;
- Education on sustainable farming practices, like crop rotation and soil management;
- Upgraded coastal infrastructure to survive sea level rise and large storms;
- Mandated community and stakeholder involvement in the planning and implementation of resiliency measures;
- Monitoring and holding accountable state agencies and programs to ensure implementation of goals to “lead by example.”

Because it is not enough to simply set a goal, CTLCV also asks any Green New Deal include a mechanism, such as a **Green New Deal Advisory Committee, to track, report, and advise on the bill’s progress.** This Committee could be composed of a diverse group of stakeholders, including, but not limited to local and statewide legislators, climate scientists, economists, labor representatives, and business leaders. It could be empowered to report and advise on the

programs implemented through the Green New Deal. In this manner, the legislature will be armed with the knowledge it needs to expand successful programs and modify those that fail to meet expectations.

Connecticut cannot afford half-measures when it comes to climate change. CTLCV applauds the Green New Deal as serious effort to address the overarching crisis of our time.

In the absence of action in Washington, it is up to us to protect our resources and our future. The legislature has a golden opportunity to establish Connecticut as a leader in the fight against climate change, but only if we take bold action.

Thank you for your time and consideration as you deliberate on HB 5002.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Brown".

Lori Brown
Executive Director
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