



Energy & Technology Committee Informational Listening Session of September 8, 2020

SUPPORT - LCO 3920 (Section 19) - AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY RESPONSE BY ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES AND REVISING THE REGULATION OF OTHER PUBLIC UTILITIES

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the National Audubon Society through its affiliate state office, Audubon Connecticut. The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation.

Our conservation network extends statewide and includes more than 20,000 members, five Connecticut chapters, and many partners along the [Atlantic Flyway](#).

Through our conservation programs focused on Coasts, Climate, Advocacy, and Working Lands / Healthy Forests, we are working to preserve habitat and protect bird species that are of state, national, and global concern—like the Piping Plover, Wood Thrush, and Field Sparrow. It begins with birds, but our mission connects people to a much wider range of issues, such as preventing air and water pollution, reducing pesticide use, promoting land conservation and reducing the impact of global climate change on birds, wildlife, and people.

Need to Address the Impacts of Climate Change Through Resilience Projects:

Section 19 of LCO 3920 seeks to expand the successful “. . . microgrid grant and loan pilot program to support local distributed energy generation for critical facilities.” This proposal would expand this program to include resilience projects.

We support legislation that funds and implements policies to incent coastal resiliency projects, including prioritizing the protection and restoration of salt marshes, the development of natural infrastructure, and to encourage coastal buy-outs or set-backs. The expansion of the microgrid grant and loan program to include resilience projects will offer a new opportunity for funding them.

As a member of the Financing Adaptation and Resilience Workgroup of the Governor's Council on Climate Change, we have highlighted the need for additional funding for resilience projects. Whenever possible, we believe resilience projects should leverage federal funding opportunities and should prioritize vulnerable communities of promise to receive funding.

We also believe there is a need to improve Connecticut's capacity to obtain federal funding and to design first class resilience projects. For that reason, we are very pleased that the bill language includes "nonprofit" and "academic" entities as eligible for the new microgrid and resilience grant and loan pilot program.

This pilot program can only be successful if funds are allocated to the program and awarded to projects. We hope the expansion of this program by the General Assembly to include resilience projects will receive the much needed allocation of funds by the Bond Commission to make the new program successful. We are hopeful that BOTH microgrid and resilience projects will receive adequate funding should this proposal become law.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. Should you have any questions, please contact Robert LaFrance, Director of Policy, Audubon Connecticut, National Audubon Society at Robert.LaFrance@Audubon.org