



March 5, 2018

Re: S.B. 10, An Act Concerning Revenue Items to Implement the Governor's Budget

Dear Chairmen Fonfara, Rojas, Frantz, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

Audubon Connecticut, the state office of the National Audubon Society, is one of Connecticut's premier conservation and environmental education organizations. With four Chapters, nearly 17,000 members, supporters, and partners across the state, through land stewardship, science, education, and advocacy, we work to preserve habitat and protect bird species that are of state, national and global concern. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

We recognize the difficulties in creating fiscal stability and economic growth in our state by this Committee. As budget negotiations unfold, we hope you will oppose the sweeping of funds within some of the state's core conservation and energy programs.

In particular, there are a few critical observations we'd like the Committee to keep in mind as budget decisions unfold:

First, we hope you will consider and adopt a state budget that does not further raid ratepayer clean energy funds from the **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, Connecticut Green Bank or Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund**. Current sweeps from the state's biennial budget adopted last year are already having disastrous consequences to our state's clean energy economy. This undermines the cost of clean energy in our state and job creation in our new clean energy economy. We must act with integrity and use the funds for their intended purpose.

Second, the **Community Investment Act** is the only dedicated fund intended to support investments in Open Space, Farmland/Dairy Support, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing. Further sweeps and disproportionate cuts could seriously jeopardize the future of the program and the reinvestment opportunity in our communities.

Our state's environmental legacy is at stake and could be damaged for generations to come if conservation, clean energy, and environmental protection programs are underfunded, raided, and eliminated. We want future generations to have access to Connecticut's unique natural beauty and clean energy economy.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you.

Genese Leach, Policy Manager