



The Garden Club of New Haven

Promoting the preservation of natural resources is one of the primary missions of The Garden Club of New Haven (GCNH) and of the organizations with which is affiliated, the Federated Garden Club of Connecticut and the Garden Club of America. Since 2011, GCNH has actively participated in educating the public about issues involving trees and power and advocating for a balanced approach to preserving the benefits of trees and protecting public safety, including power reliability.

January 26, 2022

Office of Governor Ned Lamont
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

via e-mail: governor.lamont@ct.gov

Re: Statewide Strategy for Undergrounding of Electric and Communication Wires and Cables

Dear Governor Lamont:

The Garden Club of New Haven submits the attached Memorandum in Support of a Statewide Strategy for Undergrounding of Electric and Communication Wires and Cables for your consideration, to ensure much greater resilience for Connecticut in dealing with the current and future challenges of climate change. We ask that you lead by example, as you suggested in Executive Order 3-21, and work with the General Assembly to adopt such a strategy this year.

It is critically important that the distribution of electricity be reliable and resilient as the state moves to much greater dependence on electric energy from renewable resources to power the economy, such as for electric vehicles, heating and cooking. As the attached memorandum explains, undergrounding of electric and communication wires will significantly reduce the frequency and duration of power and communication outages from extreme weather and reduce utility operating and maintenance costs.

Frequent, long power outages impose significant socio-economic costs on the state, municipalities, residents and businesses, and can impede functioning of other critical infrastructure and services. In addition, by eliminating the ever more costly vegetation management for overhead lines, the roadside tree canopy can be better maintained and expanded to lower income and underserved areas, providing such benefits as protecting against the heat island effect, absorbing stormwater to reduce flooding, and removing pollutants from the air.

A strategy for undergrounding of electric and communication distribution wires and cables must be a part of DEEP's 2022 Comprehensive Energy Strategy, and the Energy & Technology and Environment Committees of the General Assembly should begin work on needed legislation in cooperation with your administration and in consultation, as appropriate, with PURA.

We would be glad to assist you, DEEP, and the Energy & Technology and Environment Committees in this extremely important effort.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary-Michelle U. Hirschhoff
Spokesperson on Trees and Power
The Garden Club of New Haven
P.O. Box 6197
Hamden, CT 06517
<https://www.gardenclubofnewhaven.org>
gcnhtreesandpower@gmail.com

Attachment

cc: Commissioner Katie Dykes, DEEP
Energy and Technology Committee:
Norman Needleman, Co-Chair
David Arconti, Co-Chair
Paul M. Formica, Ranking Member
Charles J. Ferraro, Ranking Member
Environment Committee:
Christine Cohen, Co-Chair
Joseph P. Gresko, Co-Chair
Craig Miner, Ranking Member
Stephen G. Harding, Ranking Member
PURA:
Marissa Gillett, Chairman
John W. Betkoski II, Vice-Chairman
Michael Caron, Commissioner