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Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Position
<b>Raised H.B. 6397: AN ACT CONCERNING ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS.</b>	Support

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is the first nonprofit conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. For over 128 years, CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly on various State Park and Forest, trail recreation, sustainable forestry, and land conservation issues.

Thank you for raising HB 6397 which both recognizes that climate change is a public health and environmental justice emergency, and emphasizes the urgent actions necessary for Connecticut to reach its zero-carbon emissions goals.

Although we support this bill, we encourage the Committee to incorporate information into this bill that recognizes the importance of nature-based solutions -- Connecticut's working and natural lands, soils, wetlands, and other natural resources -- as critical elements of sequestering and storing carbon (known as "negative emissions") as part of our state's urgent fight against climate change.

Beginning on page 74 of DEEP's [legislative package for 2023](#), the Department observes that "The IRA [Inflation Reduction Act] also makes a \$20 billion investment in climate-smart agriculture and forestry to harness the carbon sequestration and storage potential of our natural and working lands as well as carbon capture and storage technologies which would result in negative emissions. Adopting negative emissions tracking as part of monitoring our progress towards a net zero target aligns with this new federal investment."

DEEP continues on page 75 that "15 US Climate Alliance member states have natural and working lands explicitly integrated into their greenhouse gas inventories in statute, including Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Vermont. While other states may not have it explicitly in their inventory statute, with the adoption of net zero/carbon neutral goals, they are interpreting that goal change to also require updating their inventory to include natural and working lands. This is the case with Rhode Island and New York."

DEEP concludes that "The Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) and its 231 working group members supported a recommendation to "evaluate usable models to reliably monitor and report on negative carbon emissions related to working and natural lands," and then offers draft legislative language.

We are hopeful that these important recommendations from the Governor's Council on Climate Change embodied in DEEP's legislative package will be considered in HB 6397, or perhaps in companion legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. I'd be glad to respond to any questions you may have.