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

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Position
<b>Raised SB 1145:</b> AAC THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SECTOR SPECIFIC SUBTARGETS FOR GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS AND REGULATING EMISSIONS OF SMALL OFF-ROAD ENGINES.	Support, in particular Sections 2-4 & 7

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.

I want to thank the Committee for raising SB 1145, in particular Sections 2 – 4 and 7 of the bill, which recognizes the significance of Connecticut’s natural and working lands in both mitigating and adapting to climate change.

The U.S. Climate Alliance published a report in late 2022 entitled [Natural and Working Lands and Climate Action: A State Guide to Enhance the Sector’s Contribution to State and National Climate Goals](#). In the report, USCA notes that according to the U.S. EPA (2019 report), natural and working lands (NWLs) currently sequester approximately 714 million metric tons (MMT) a year in the U.S. which is equivalent to approximately 12 percent of annual U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The report further states that sustainable management of NWLs could increase net carbon removal to 20 percent or more of annual U.S. GHG emissions. The report also notes that although NWLs are one of the most cost-effective and enduring solutions to the climate crisis, the benefits of NWLs can also be degraded by various factors so it is essential to set strategic near- and long-term goals for their conservation and management.

SB 1145 would establish monitoring to determine and track the contribution of NWLs to Connecticut’s carbon balance; that is, understanding how NWLs emit, sequester, and store carbon over time as they are utilized for various objectives such as food and forest products, outdoor recreation and tourism, and many other social and cultural, environmental, and economic uses.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on this important bill.