

To: Honored Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Energy and Technology Committee

From: Darien Pollinator Pathway, 81 Locust Hill Rd, Darien, CT 06820

March 2, 2021

On behalf of the Darien Pollinator Pathway, thank you for allowing us to submit testimony on Raised Bill 950 *AN ACT CONCERNING THE REPLACEMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITY POLES AND REVISING VEGETATION MANAGEMENT IN UTILITY PROTECTION ZONES*.

We are shocked to see this Bill introduced. We have reviewed the recommendations of the Forests Subgroup, reported to Governor Lamont as part of the GC3, CT DEEP's [Forest Action Plan](#) which notes among other things, a national priority to enhance public benefits from trees and forests and we attended CT DEEP's webinar on the topic of a potential "no net loss of forest" policy for our State. How is it that our government can recognize all of the ecological services provided to us by trees and forests and make related recommendations, while at the same time consider legislation that undermines this work and these recommendations? Raised Bill 950 appears to give carte blanche, and further legitimacy, to the apparent mission of utilities to remove and prune trees, ostensibly for safety. Raised Bill 950 contains no compensating measures for this license to fell and fails to address the real problem we have, namely that lines should not be carried overhead. If we could view burying the lines as a sensible and ultimately cost-saving long-term investment we would be able to prevent the stress, danger and expense of storm induced power outages and the after-the-fact response of utilities to cut down trees. Burying the lines would be a win-win solution for citizens and utilities alike.

Thank you for considering our comments,

Juliet Cain, Chair, Darien Pollinator Pathway