



Dear Environment Committee Members:

**Re: Committee Bill No. 122: AN ACT CONCERNING THE REPLANTING OF TREES IN PUBLIC AREAS CLEARED BY UTILITY COMPANIES.**

We thank you for the introduction of Committee Bill No.122. We support the Bill inclusive of the following additions that we believe are necessary for it to be successful:

1. Include language clearly stating that the Bill is not intended as an authorization or endorsement of the widespread practices of tree removals currently being implemented by utilities.
2. State clearly how often and the amounts of replenishments the utilities will be required to contribute to the fund.
3. Require maintenance after any tree planting. Trees are often planted in challenging locations with little or no maintenance, ensuring they will not survive. Credit is received for plantings of which communities will never receive the benefits.
4. Do not charge ratepayers for these costs as they are paying for the removals.
5. Require utilities to choose from a published list of suitable species, focused on natives tolerant of a warming climate.
6. Provide enforceable new tree specifications that include a minimum required caliper along with canopy characteristics, similar to those removed, to result in no net loss.

We sincerely thank you for your efforts to protect our statewide forest at this critical time. The Greenwich Tree Conservancy supports protection of Connecticut's electrical grid and knows that suitable vegetation management, along with undergrounding of wires in municipal areas, will ensure a stable grid along with a healthier environment for all residents to enjoy in the coming decades. This balance is critical to the quality of life for our children and grandchildren.

Respectfully submitted,

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