

Fairfield at the CT League of Conservation Voters 2020 Environmental Summit



The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters held its Annual Environmental Summit at Trinity College in January. CTLCV has been hosting this event for 20 years. It was a sign of the times that this year's summit drew a standing room only crowd of over 330 attendees, bringing together state officials, 30 state legislators, representatives from NGO's such as Sierra Club and Save the Sound, local officials, and a host of concerned citizens from all over the state.

The summit panels addressed a wide range of environmental issues that will either be coming up in the legislature or should be- including toxins and pollutants in our health stream, climate change, conservation, and transportation initiatives. One of the most useful takeaways included position papers given to every attendee - which explained the issues, suggested solutions, and included contact info for people to get involved.



Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz noted that the Governor and she are “committed to insuring that Connecticut remains a leader on climate action.” and were committed to lead by example and reduce the carbon footprint of state government.

“With a stunning lack of leadership coming from the White House,” said Bysiewicz, “and not just lack of leadership- backward movement in the face of this global threat- Governor Lamont is stepping up and working with other Northeastern Governors to collaborate and address this pressing issue.”

Katie Dykes, Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, gave an overview of the work DEEP had been doing on issues such as the Long Island Sound Blue Plan, offshore wind, and PFAS remediation. She caused a stir with her proclamation “Natural gas is not a bridge fuel; it’s a fossil fuel,” hinting that Connecticut’s relationship with the ISO would be scrutinized by DEEP to see if membership was serving the best interests of the state’s becoming zero net energy by 2040.

Dykes stressed how important water is to Connecticut, and that managing our water resources should be primary. “We believe that water is a public trust. “The Governor cares about clean air, clean water a safe and healthy environment in a future free from the threat of climate change.” When the Commissioner confessed that climate change was what kept her up at night, more than a few in the audience breathed an assent of solidarity.



The town of Fairfield was well represented, with State Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey and Senator Tony Hwang both clocking in. Tara Cook Littman, an Environment and Food Policy Advocate, spoke on the pervasiveness of pesticides in our environment, specifically asking for a ban on Chlorpyrifos, a dangerous neurotoxin.

Several other Fairfield residents attended the summit and gave some of their takeaways. Lori Scala said she was “Proud to be a part of the CTLCV 2020 Summit. This amazing group of speakers and panelists not only gave us some great information on ways to make more of an impact but reconfirmed the seriousness of our situation and the damage that has been done and continues to be done. Reducing our individual carbon footprint is important, but we need to do more. We need to stand up and fight for the changes that need to be done to start reversing this damage.”

Charles Stebbins, who serves on the Board of Connecticut Audubon, was enthusiastic about the event. “This was a special opportunity to share ideas with legislators, advocates and activists. Great to see the youth panel...it was the highlight of the session in light of Greta Thunberg’s Right Livelihood Awards and The International Children’s Peace Prize. It was my first summit...and I look forward to 2021!”

Mary Hogue, member of the Sustainable Fairfield Task Force, a co-chair of CTLCV, noted “The annual CTLCV Environmental Summit was an amazing amalgam of government, corporate, nonprofit entities and private citizens convening to educate and

exhort each other to do better and move our state to a higher standard. This year, we raised the bar on the Summit by hosting our first youth panel and attracting so many people new to the Summit that it was overflowing. CTLCV continued their tradition of pulling together the environmental community to create a clear, comprehensive overview of the issues and making it accessible to all.

Daphne Dixon, Executive Director of Live Green CT, and a SFTF member was encouraged by Commissioner Dykes remarks and is hopeful that Connecticut's transition to electric vehicles will come quickly.

Ron Blumenfeld, also of SFTF said, "The summit was an eye-opener for me. I was inspired by the depth, breadth, and level of commitment of the environmental movement in Connecticut."



Now that we're all fired up, how about you? Why not find your issue? Learn about it. Write your reps. Go to <https://www.ctlcv.org/summit.html> to find Summit literature and a video recording of the event.

The Environment Committee meets in the Legislative Office Building (LOB), 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford. All are welcome to speak. You can find out when they meet and their agenda [here](#), it will also list the room they will meet in. You can find more information on the subjects [here](#). If you cannot make a meeting, you can email a letter in support or opposition of a bill to envtestimony@cga.ct.gov (make sure the letter is sent as an attachment) and include your name and address for recording purposes.