Robert Dubrow: Okay, so we have a small group, so I think this could be informal you know.

Robert Dubrow: I think Sam said that would be fine too so but it’s a pleasure to introduce.

Robert Dubrow: Sam die now ski from the director of the Connecticut chapter.

Robert Dubrow: What was that.

Robert Dubrow: i'm director of the Connecticut chapter of the Sierra Club to talk about legislative priorities for this session with regards to climate change legislation, in particular so thanks Sam.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: yeah happy to be here good to see y’all um.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: I have a slide deck i’m going to share I can do that give it a try.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: And let me put it in present Can you see my backup slide 120 Connecticut General Assembly climate legislation can everyone see that.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: legislators and committees introduced legislation they have hearings that are open to the public for comment.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: committees, then vote on bills under their purview and before they move through the process that could include being voted on by other committees, but then ultimately if they make it through the to the House and Senate.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: And and get.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Votes of approval, they will become law and.
We are in sort of the tail end of the public hearing phase right now, so we have a good sense of what bills have been raised, what bills have now had a public hearing some have even been voted out of committee so we’re winnowing down from thousands of bills to a much more manageable number so I’m glad to be able to share with you kind of a list of bills that are on the move.

And, and that we think are.

A possibility to end up in the final passage phase, and I just thought I’d put that into the context kind of the universe of bills, I thought about sharing with you today and the context, I wanted to put it in was.

Climate and our Connecticut’s.

main climate law, which is the global warming solution Act, which requires that requires mandates that the state.

Economy wide reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% below levels by 2030 and 80%.

By 2050, and so what you see here on this slide is a graphic from the State Department of energy and environmental protections greenhouse gas inventory their latest greenhouse gas inventory is 2017 they’re always kind of a few years behind because the way the data comes in.

which gives you a sense if you can kind of eyeball what looks like.

And then use your imagination to project out to 2030 and then.

um we have some serious work to do there is going to there needs to be a massive decrease in greenhouse gases here in the state if we’re going to meet these goals, and it is State law and it is a mandate.

On the left, you can see how the breakdown is right now.

The three biggest sources of greenhouse gases in Connecticut our transportation represented 38% electricity generation which 21% and buildings, which is commercial.
Sam D she/her Sierra Club: and residential.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: and residential buildings.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: So in that context and.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: I’m going to talk a little bit about bills in the legislature, but in that context.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: We have nine years right before 2030 that we have to make this massive decrease and we’re just really not seeing kind of the urgent action and the bold action that’s going to be needed to meet these targets, we are seeing some action, and it has some real possibility.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: But it’s concerning.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Because we really have a lot of work to do, but I’m going to cover some bills, I like to slides on these that cover these major areas and then some other areas.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: of bills, I see that have been introduced that are.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Most of them moving through the process and I’ve highlighted a few that either, are you might have heard about, or that I think, have the most.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: greenhouse gas reduction possibility and so in transportation we’re seeing a number of bills that will either directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Or will.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: promote more walking biking.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Non vehicle and alternatives to reducing greenhouse gas.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Emissions So the first one, you see here an act concerning emission standards for medium and heavy duty vehicles California last year adopted something called the advanced clean truck rule which will.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: over a very short period of time require all trucks to be zero emission and that includes you know. Buses garbage trucks and pretty much anything you can name and kind of that medium and
heavy duty category, and so this bill, I think, is a huge step in the right direction, it would allow the Connecticut deep the Department of energy and environmental protection to.

47 00:07:15.870 --> 00:07:19.260 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: analyze the the California advanced clean truck roll.

48 00:07:21.000 --> 00:07:25.290 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Its and decide whether to adopted as a regulation in Connecticut.

49 00:07:27.570 --> 00:07:34.620 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: We have as a state signed up to a multi state commitment for medium and heavy duty vehicles so it’s really a step.

50 00:07:36.240 --> 00:07:45.150 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: That our state can take to fulfill that mo you and hopefully the other states that have also signed on will also be moving in this direction so.

51 00:07:46.260 --> 00:07:55.800 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: While California is clearly leading, we hope that there will be many states that that follow and can have real a real impact on this um.

52 00:07:56.970 --> 00:08:07.830 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: i’m not going to go through each one but maybe we can take questions at the end is to what they are, but the other one I highlighted you’ve probably heard a lot about an act, this is a governor’s bill.

53 00:08:08.700 --> 00:08:21.330 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: introduced and is moving through the Environment Committee enact reducing transportation related carbon emissions it’s to implement a program called the transportation and climate initiative, otherwise known as gci.

54 00:08:23.160 --> 00:08:24.720 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And you can see what the right what.

55 00:08:25.740 --> 00:08:32.760 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: I put the Sierra club’s position on these bills and we are watching that bill, there is, it has very.

56 00:08:34.680 --> 00:08:40.680 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: One of the main threads of this program is to reduce emissions in.

57 00:08:42.570 --> 00:08:51.180 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: In communities that are already overburdened by pollution and underserved by the transportation system, and so we have asked legislators to really.

58 00:08:52.050 --> 00:09:04.020 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Do the appropriate outreach and hear from those communities as to how they want to see this bill framed so it has a lot of potential to reduce carbon emissions and to do.

59 00:09:05.820 --> 00:09:13.080 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And to prioritize vulnerable communities and, and so we want those vulnerable can use to be at the Center of this decision making.
Sam D she/her Sierra Club: In buildings.

There are, as you can see a couple of bills that.

That fall into this category of helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the one we think really is the most exciting and would have the greatest impact on reducing emissions is Senate Bill 356 to establish an energy efficiency rhetoric bit grant program for affordable housing.

And this bill is still in the works, it has that there’s a draft introduced it’s been approved by the housing committee.

But is very much still a work in progress, but the goal is to create a comprehensive program that not only does energy efficiency, which we have these great energy efficiency programs in our state, but that builds in things that the energy efficiency program doesn’t have it would address.

Some of the health and safety hazards that prevent ratepayers from fully.

utilizing the energy efficiency program oftentimes energy efficiency auditors will go into homes and find things like gas leaks mold asbestos vermiculite.

Some of the health and safety hazards that prevent ratepayers from fully.

Making the building envelope as as efficient as possible, because it becomes a safety hazard to do that.

And so, for the first time, there would be a program that would, if this is found would address those issues and the other way that it’s a comprehensive program is it also includes adding solar and energy efficient heat pumps when doing energy efficient energy efficiency retrofits.

And, and it sets targets of.

Doing this work in overtime, beginning with 5% of all affordable housing units and moving up with to eventually be a program that’s available for all.

Low to moderate income residents, it could be huge it’s something that Massachusetts is also
looking at in their legislature their bill aims to retrofit a million homes over 10 years, so it is ambitious and really meets the.

74 00:11:50.190 --> 00:11:58.320 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: The scale that we’re talking about early your of what we need to do to really decarbonize these sectors um.

75 00:12:00.180 --> 00:12:01.530 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Let me move to the next slide.

76 00:12:03.480 --> 00:12:17.190 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: There we go i’m on electricity generation and utilities, the most exciting bill of the session is the one i’ve highlighted on the top and this bill is effectively dead right now.

77 00:12:17.640 --> 00:12:32.580 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: um it was introduced by state Senator Christine Cohen, who is the Chair of the Environment Committee to establish a moratorium on the construction of new fossil fuel power plants, and right now Connecticut is.

78 00:12:34.350 --> 00:12:39.600 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Looking at the possible construction of two brand new fossil fuel power plants that.

79 00:12:40.980 --> 00:12:58.140 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: We don’t need we produce more energy and can I get then we use back, we only use 73% of the electricity regenerate the region doesn’t need by independent analysis and in even by ISIS new england’s own.

80 00:13:00.270 --> 00:13:12.330 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: own calculations and yet our State Department of environmental of energy, environmental protection, has issued permits for these two plants to move forward and so.

81 00:13:14.940 --> 00:13:24.780 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: With nothing in place to stop this we could continue to see fossil fuel power plants be cited and built in Connecticut and so Center Cohen introduced this bill.

82 00:13:25.200 --> 00:13:35.160 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And even though she’s the Chair of the Environment Committee, because it’s about power plants it got moved to the energy and Technology Committee, where the committee chose not to raise it or hear it.

83 00:13:36.900 --> 00:13:37.710 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: So, probably.

84 00:13:38.850 --> 00:13:52.140 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: In our view, one of the most important bills to to ensure that we don’t continue adding greenhouse gases in the electricity sector was was killed by the Energy Committee i’m.

85 00:13:52.440 --> 00:13:52.980 Robert Dubrow: question.

86 00:13:53.040 --> 00:13:59.250 Robert Dubrow: quick question, yes, so what what there’s the killingly power plants that’s been planned and what’s the second one.
So there is a proposal for 375 megawatts of electricity generation should. It would replace two old turbines 60 year old turbines that are used only as speakers, a few days of year and be allowed to run I believe 187 days a year, producing a million tons of carbon, which is over 100,000. More than the plant currently produces.

and deep tentatively approved the air permits for that plant it’s right now in a public comment phase back public comments are do today on that. Which Sierra club and others others in middletown especially there’s a really robust group of advocates. opposing this proposal, it was not cleared by ISO New England, so the regional.

we don’t need it, yet Connecticut Steve continues to move forward with this. And I, you can see here, there are some bills, we oppose there’s actually bill, so it will increase the use of fossil fuels and increased subsidies for the use of fossil fuels, which is really in the wrong direction.

And then I just want to say a few things about the SP add to that is the governor’s bill and other governors bill, which has several three key provisions, but the one that we’re focusing on and what changes with is you know the governor in.

set a goal, he actually signed an executive order that the state would have 100% zero carbon electricity by 2040 and so that’s very exciting and we support that the bill, however.

really is missing a key component, the way the bill is written, is that we will have 100% zero carbon electricity supply to customers in the state by 2040.

And so, like I said reproduce way more energy Ray more electricity here in Connecticut that
we use and it ignores all that additional electricity that we don’t use so, in
theory, we could meet this 20 1400 percent zero carbon goal and still have 54
power plants in our state.

102 00:16:33.510 --> 00:16:35.640 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: combusting fossil
fuels and.

103 00:16:36.990 --> 00:16:40.800 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: emitting carbon
into the atmosphere un.

104 00:16:42.030 --> 00:16:46.710 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: And then, I just
wanted to you know those fell into the kind of those three big categories areas
where.

105 00:16:49.230 --> 00:16:55.110 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Where we we
generate the most greenhouse gases, but I wanted to had a couple other kind of
like.

106 00:16:56.130 --> 00:16:59.880 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: loose areas that
I wanted to talk about on climate.

107 00:17:01.680 --> 00:17:05.220 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: I think this one
is highlighted because it’s such an exciting bill if.

108 00:17:07.320 --> 00:17:15.090 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: You know the
financial sector has a big role to play in terms of ramping down fossil fuels and.

109 00:17:16.890 --> 00:17:20.040 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: You know, banks
asset managers and insurance companies.

110 00:17:21.150 --> 00:17:39.990 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: are investing
their assets into fossil fuel companies, and I think the bank’s get the most
media attention and folks probably know about that, but as a major hub of the
insurance industry yeah you know Connecticut has a big role to play in terms of.

111 00:17:42.120 --> 00:17:43.890 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Climate and our
insurance companies.

112 00:17:43.950 --> 00:17:50.070 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: And so ensures
and and, unlike banks and asset managers ensures have like a.

113 00:17:51.450 --> 00:17:56.340 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: outsized role in
fossil fuels, because not only do they take.

114 00:17:58.050 --> 00:17:59.670 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Their policy-
holders.

115 00:18:01.590 --> 00:18:12.510 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Funds and invest
them in order to pay out premiums later and they invest them pretty heavily
in fossil fuels for those that are property and.
Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: casualty companies, they are underwriting fossil fuel projects, so they have a double whammy where they’re.

And so, this is this bill is the first in the nation that would require the insurance companies to disclose to our state insurance department who’s been a real leader on insurance and climate change.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: to disclose to them their total premiums written for fossil fuel projects in addition to.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Their investments in fossil fuel companies and to.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Have a better and more uniform way of.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: analyzing their climate risk associated with that and.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: For ensures you know this is pretty important because they can become insolvent pretty quickly.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: If they have a huge climate rest so understanding that risk is good for the industry, but it’s also good for those of us who care about climate.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: When we know and it’s transparent who they’re investing in and how much their underwriting and fossil fuels, we as consumers can make decisions.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Based on that information so it’s a really big deal the spill and will have national and I think international implications.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And we have two big bills on.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Environmental justice which are exciting I they’re an important I didn’t highlight them because i’m not sure how much they’re going to drive down.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Greenhouse gases in relation to these other bills, but what they the 6551 is intended to ensure that we are not don’t continue to site in the way we have been.
Sam D she/her Sierra Club: That.

Admit local air pollutants that have a disproportionate impact on the health of those communities and then hb i’m sorry that should be sb 999 senate bill nine nine. Is a bill regarding the workforce and so ensuring, as we make this transition from a fossil fuel economy to a clean energy economy that.

The jobs, we are creating are good jobs because fossil fuel jobs are quite honestly good jobs.

And we want to make sure that this transition that we’re trying to make to you know, protect us from climate change and also you know, has a positive impact in terms of our workers and our workforce.

un so I probably I talked way longer than I think my time was a lot of for, but that is in summary.

kind of some of the key things I don’t think it’s everything that’s happening probably on this front in the legislature, but and happy to take any questions or just have a discussion about about this.

Before I do that, let me just move one slide in advance on things, I think.

I, like you, and folks that care about these issues to to hear and so it’s it’s my recommendations on how to move forward one is that you know legislators want to hear from you.

So be sure to connect with them they’re very busy right now, but many of them host 10 calls, you know they have emails and social media accounts and and phone numbers, you can reach them at and just connecting with them and.

Asking for their support on or opposition to these things is very helpful, they need to hear from people, but I think you know to my point earlier that.

I don’t think we’re doing nearly enough.

I think legislators many legislators need to have some more climate education and to bust the myth that.

special interests that are bound basis because of special interest that the capital, you know we often hear the narrative that you know.
We need the energy we don’t. We often hear the narrative on fossil gas that it’s cleaner and so it’s better for the environment it’s still a fossil fuel. The leaks coming out of gas pipelines really double the climate impact and often what the here’s the combustion impact and not not the whole story, we often hear.

They often hear things like Oh well, heat pumps won’t work here it’s too cold here it’s just it’s these are myths that.

You know that that are not held up when when.

Folks that actually have heat pumps are putting in brand new heat pumps are are doing this work know to be true, and then lastly.

Build power, and what that means is you know we can each reach out as individuals and it’s important that we do and it’s important that we.

People to show up. That’s the constituents from their district to band together and to be.

In droves, that are their constituents from their district to band together and to be.

Be pushing them to do more to be pushing them harder and to do more.

So.

I promised i’d stop talking and then so now i’ll stop.

Well, thanks, Sam.
Robert Dubrow: question and then with one question, and maybe they started, and so my question is, do you understand. Like what’s behind the support for these two power plants killingly in middletown you know what I mean the arguments are pretty obvious if there’s a goal.

Robert Dubrow: of zero carbon electricity by 2040 you don’t build new power plants, so there must be kind of you know power issues or you know corporate power, etc, that i’m guessing that’s that that’s driving this do you have an understanding it.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: um I think there’s probably some degree about that, but I also think. What I see a sort of a culture in our State Agency to apply a very narrow set of criteria to permits and so you know there’s some checkboxes and they check the boxes and it moves along the permits are not being looked at in the wider.

You know the wider context which is it will this comply with our global warming solution Act does this meet that are you know the goals for zero carbon electricity by.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Because those aren’t explicitly named as things that the permit reviewers have to look at they don’t.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: What I see a sort of a culture in our State Agency to apply a very narrow set of criteria to permits and so you know there’s some checkboxes and they check the boxes and it moves along the permits are not being looked at in the wider.

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Sam D she/her Sierra Club: You know the wider context which is it will this comply with our global warming solution Act does this meet that are you know the goals for zero carbon electricity by.

Heidi Richard: And Sam Thank you and how would that happen.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: So there’s a number of ways, it could happen, one could just be that moratorium on fossil fuel power plants, it would just make it impossible for them to approve anymore, so that would be one way.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Another way, and this was done in New York and their landmark climate law that they passed in 2019 was to require that all permitting and agency decision making things like contracts and grants.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: comply with the global warming solution act and if it didn’t you know if there was some public need that they had to approve something they’d have to you know, have an explanation for that was supplied.
Sam D she/her Sierra Club: And that I share the environmental justice bill 6551.

That is a place. Where advocates are asking for that kind of measure to be put in place it’s been done in New York.

And so we think it’s necessary for Connecticut to be able to do it here.

And then the other place that legislators have an opportunity to do it in this 2020 session is in the bill, I was describing senate bill a day to the governor’s fill that would qualify the hundred percent executive order is to.

Have that covered, not just electricity supplied to electric customers in the state, but have it apply to electricity supply to customers and generated here in the state, and while that wouldn’t happen until.

I think it would be a strong signal to the industry that we’re going to be done with fossil fuel power plants by 2040 and gives them plenty of time to plan.

For alternatives, and I think it would you know new folks considering power plants and Connecticut with though that their time is limited.

And all of those could be enacted and they wouldn’t be counter to you know they wouldn’t conflict with one another and or any one of them would help all three of them together.

would be the way to go.

Any other questions.

Yes, I had, I had a question when you are sad when you were discussing the.

buildings.

At.

In terms of retrofitting and.

You know all the measures that.

That you know that we could aspire to do you know if there are or will be.
191 00:29:11.790 --> 00:29:18.600 Heidi Richard: Additional resources dedicated find the State to do this and does that come from the federal government from state and federal.

192 00:29:19.590 --> 00:29:30.690 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: yeah, as I mentioned there’s still a lot it’s still a work in progress, because when you, you know this volume and, as I said, Massachusetts looking as retrofitting a million homes.

193 00:29:31.500 --> 00:29:44.550 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: it’s huge it’s huge and so right now there is a small funding mechanism that’s really kind of a drop in the bucket and the bill, which would be I think it’s a fee new building permits.

194 00:29:46.920 --> 00:30:07.230 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: We expect so every bill that goes to the legislature gets a fiscal note on the cost of the program so that they know how to appropriate funds for it, so now that it’s out of the first has to pass the committee then it moves on to that stage where the bill, yes, both the fiscal note and.

195 00:30:08.310 --> 00:30:18.990 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: The office of legislative research puts together a summary of the bill so folks can quickly understand what it’s doing that has not happened yet.

196 00:30:20.130 --> 00:30:25.800 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: But I would expect this kind of program is gonna is going to cost money, we have because it’s.

197 00:30:26.190 --> 00:30:36.240 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Part of it as energy efficiency, we already have an energy efficiency program so you could tie into that but those other pieces, that are the comprehensive pieces that we don’t do right now the.

198 00:30:38.160 --> 00:30:44.550 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: mitigating the health and safety barriers, the solar and heat pumps would need to be funded, and I think.

199 00:30:45.720 --> 00:30:47.670 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: One of the things that sets us up for.

200 00:30:49.470 --> 00:30:58.800 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: is to be able to receive federal funds, and we know the the kind of the build bath better proposal we’re expecting to see from the Biden administration.

201 00:31:00.210 --> 00:31:05.340 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Is in is going to be driven towards things that you know, reduce.

202 00:31:08.010 --> 00:31:11.130 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: prepare us, you know, in terms of climate change, so reduce.

203 00:31:12.180 --> 00:31:22.30 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And, and the
greenhouse gases, the build back better is about like good jobs it’s about vulnerable communities.

204 00:31:23.340 --> 00:31:28.830 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And so, this program because it incorporates those things as well, I think, is.

205 00:31:29.940 --> 00:31:42.150 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: makes us shovel ready for some of those funds and where we weren’t I think in the last stimulus that came out of the federal government Connecticut was not did not have a lot of shovel ready projects and really missed a big opportunity.

206 00:31:47.040 --> 00:31:47.490 Heidi Richard: Thank you.

207 00:31:50.190 --> 00:32:03.990 Brian Weiss: I have a question i’m sorry I had to duck out for one minute and I may have missed this, but so what like what can the average person like myself do to kind of help these things a lot make try and make some kind of difference.

208 00:32:05.070 --> 00:32:07.050 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: yeah, so I think like.

209 00:32:07.080 --> 00:32:08.070 Brian Weiss: To the extent you.

210 00:32:09.210 --> 00:32:11.280 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: can connect with your own legislator.

211 00:32:13.260 --> 00:32:18.000 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: so that they know that these things are happening, so the way the legislature works is that.

212 00:32:19.320 --> 00:32:28.680 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: legislators are assigned committees and so these things have just made the themselves through the committee process, so if a legislator is not on the housing committee they’re not going to know about this housing bill.

213 00:32:28.890 --> 00:32:36.780 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And so to hear from a constituent that it’s a bill that you care about they should be paying attention to will elevate it in there.

214 00:32:38.100 --> 00:32:38.970 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: You know, for them.

215 00:32:41.220 --> 00:32:43.410 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And you know legislators have.

216 00:32:45.750 --> 00:32:56.850 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Open houses virtual open houses, right now, you know town halls advocacy hours that sort of thing, so you know you can email them, you can call them, you can show up at these things um.

217 00:32:58.020 --> 00:33:04.650 Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And then you know groups like Sierra club and others we send out action alerts to say like okay it’s a critical time.
Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: call them now on this bill and so watch out for those things because.

You know, we send we don’t just send them because we love the bill we we’re actually thinking about when do we need to send this and when who needs to hear from. And so, those are timed, in a way that should flag for you, that something’s happening and and check in with folks and then we you know I think all of us, usually have some pretty specific instructions and some easy one click ways of.

Getting in touch with legislators.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: I will say, like their email boxes are. bonkers so it’s always good to follow up with a phone call or so, you know if you connected with them on social media to Ping them there. To say hey just sent you an email, this is an issue I care about you know, the more you can elevate with them, the more you can show up in there and spaces there at the better and.

I think that also helps for her relationship so that, over time, you are, you know they they know who you are and they they.

come to know what you care about and and learn from you.

If you’re a re-source for them that they can learn.

that’s really helpful.

Can I follow up on that with another question, do you know if there’s like a one stop shop where.

there’s an you know description of all of these bills.

gearied towards the lay audience that they can help understand you know what they are and what impact positive or negative, they could have, as well as you know.

Pointing folks to.
Heidi Richard: You know just assuming you know, maybe the most uninformed.

Heidi Richard: who may not might not even know who their legislators offer so going to the two in that direction, so they know how to contact them.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Yes, so we have on our website and and you all know, there's so many really powerful and great environmental groups here in our state.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Since we.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: are a state that really cares about climate and environment, and so we aren't the only ones with something on our website about about these things but i'll put the link into the chat where you can find kind of our legislative trapper i'm.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Admittedly, it doesn’t have like a basic explainer of everything, because things move really fast and.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: And that in the chat for you and I will also drop in the chat.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: The legislative website, which is cga ct.gov where you can look up any.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: bill that you see i’m like I said once it goes to the process, there is an explainer.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: From the office of legislative research about what the bill is.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: And the legislative website has.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: You know, every legislator, they have a lookup tool and they tell you how to contact them, so a lot of those resources are there and.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: I think that’s that’s probably the best way to start in terms of trying to track and follow in and learn what’s going on on our site, we do try and drop in our testimony on these bills, as well as any action alerts or fact sheets that we have.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: A lot of clicking, though.
Heidi Richard: So I don’t want to monopolize discussion, but.

Heidi Richard: I was wondering earlier.

Heidi Richard: And you just mentioned the fact that there are so many other powerful and you know passionate governmental organizations in the state.

Heidi Richard: Into your point about building power, is there any kind of coalition partnership, amongst them or even just a few of them, so that there is more more strength behind what we’re all trying to do.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Yeah I think we’re really fortunate we do have some spaces, where we meet together to talk and so.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: You know I think we avoid a lot of competition and duplication and instead are doing a lot of work together, I mean there’s plenty of room in this space for everyone.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: To have a role.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: And like just a couple examples of that is that you know some organizations kind of specialize in some issue areas where others don’t, and I say like for Sierra club our space has largely been.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: On fossil gas and trying to end fossil fuel expansion in the state and we work with partners on that, but others some others don’t work on it as much, and they rely on us and our partners in that space to share information and tell them what’s happening.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: So that they can be an ally for that and we do the same with them, you know I didn’t talk a lot I dropped into that list some climate adaptation.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Climate adaptation bill, and there are some of our partners that work more in that space, and so we we lean on them for information about that.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: I didn’t mention things like P false and plastics, which we work as an ally on but others are leaders in that space and are the knowledge experts me turn to them.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: So in that way you know we we work together and avoid duplication, but in other ways we do to you know, some are more focused on.
Sam D she/her Sierra Club: The legal dockets.

That happened at the regulatory level.

and others like Sierra Club we we have legal and we engage in the dockets. But our main focus is mobilizing our grassroots face and having.

volunteer leaders work on these issues, you know, so in that way, our organizations also have you know some differences in the way we work, in the end the strength we bring to the table for.

For the whole the betterment of the whole.

Heidi Richard: sounds like a very complimentary partnership, whether intentional or not.

We tried to be an eye it’s very intentional, because I, you know i’ve only been.

In Connecticut since 2018 and I do think it hasn’t always been.

You know quite as collaborative and it’s important because we’re going to do better together.

I have a question about electric vehicles.

Robert Dubrow: I didn’t know too much about electric vehicles.

One bill but.

I would have thought there’d be more of an emphasis on you know thinking through how to promote electric vehicles, which you know, obviously, is one part of the solution.

You know, so I just wonder is there activity in terms of like expanding charging stations thinking about how to make electric vehicle vehicles and the infrastructure available to lower income communities of those sorts of issues.

yeah so that conversation is largely right now in the regulatory space.
Sam D she/her Sierra Club: State Department of Energy environmental protection put together an electric vehicle roadmap and the public utility regulatory authority PURA has an open docket working with the utilities.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Because that’s their role is regulating the utilities, but around how utilities are going to move forward with electric charging, so there is some pretty robust conversation happening.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: On kind of that side the regulatory side of things on the legislative side of things, you did see there was the one bill about direct sale, so that would allow electric vehicles manufacturers to sell directly to customers in the state.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: there’s also a bill about.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: about the cheaper program, which is the Connecticut i’m going to get it wrong is that it’s the electric vehicle and hydrogen vehicle rebate Program.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: So there’s a number of bills about ensuring that all the funding we collect for greenhouse gas reduction in the transportation like for motor vehicles actually goes to programs like that.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: And the.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Cheaper board itself has is brand new has convened is developing the program and adding a lot of has has changed the program since it got established to.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: To add a used vehicle rebate and to add.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: To have an adder and add a rebate for low income residents so there’s really been some thinking around that, but a lot more to be done.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: One of the things that happened in 2019 was a.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: lead by example mandate that the State purchase.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: At least 50% by 2030.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Light duty vehicles had to be all the purchases from the departments had to be electric vehicles and that.
The state.

Transit buses so.

Connecticut the Department of Transportation is the agency that runs Connecticut transit, which is our largest transit agency.

That all transit buses by 2030 30% of our transit buses would have to be electric purchases and I think there’s a real opportunity to up those numbers when that was passed in 2019 it it.

felt right and ambitious, but now what we know from the departments, is that they think they can do this faster, and so we see an opportunity to bump that up to 100% very quickly.

Any other questions comments I could ask another one, no one else has, but when I opened it up to other people.

Okay, so another question.

Who would you say, are the biggest allies for for Climate Action in the House and Senate Connecticut.

So there’s there’s some the two committees that are really primarily focused on these issues and that oversees the Department of energy and environmental protection or the Environment Committee and the.

Energy and Technology Committee.

So, most of the action is there in those two committees and so there’s some key leaders on on both of those committees that are that i’ll name in a minute, but um, but we also see leadership happening.

In other committees like.

The housing committee really working hard this energy retrofit bill.

There is a clean energy Caucus in the legislature and so those are legislators, you know committed to the cause of clean energy, which is.

Super exciting and that is co chaired.
By representative rehab le brennan he's a democrat from the Danbury area and representative devin carney who's a republican from the shoreline area.

And you know so so they are leaders and that whole Caucus as leaders in the space.

rehab is also the.

The vice, Chair of the energy and technology.

The vice, Chair of the energy and technology.

So a voice for clean energy.

on that committee.

And represented carney is the ranking member of transportation so voice for.

clean energy on the transportation.

In the housing space Senator Senator rick Lopes.

is leading the charge on this housing bill.

It is his top priority.

He in his.

Non legislative life, he.

Does a lot of work in.

retrofits for for older housing and he understands it and he knows the benefits of.

Solar and heat pumps so it’s really exciting to have someone who can speak from experience, and also the passion.

That he has for this.

In the Environment Committee.
326 00:46:58.920 --> 00:46:59.970 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: it’s so hard to.
327 00:47:01.530 --> 00:47:15.270 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: To pick anyone out because you know, there are some really, really strong and passionate legislators um but you know I mentioned Senator Christine Cohen, who has really been.
328 00:47:17.970 --> 00:47:21.660 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: been incredibly supportive of.
329 00:47:22.770 --> 00:47:33.540 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: The climate movement and trying to make progress, represent St Paul or presenter David Michelle representative Jonathan steinberg um.
330 00:47:36.330 --> 00:47:40.890 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: gosh I don’t want to miss anybody anyone’s watching this and I forgot to i’m sorry.
331 00:47:45.060 --> 00:47:45.960 Elaine Louden (she/her): I have a question.
332 00:47:46.170 --> 00:47:55.950 Elaine Louden (she/her): Yes, so i’m i’m originally from Ohio and upon moving to Connecticut in August I noticed that there are a lot of solar panels on groups here.
333 00:47:56.370 --> 00:48:07.050 Elaine Louden (she/her): Which is something that I wasn’t really used to seeing anywhere at all in the Midwest, and so I was wondering kind of if that process came through through a legislative process, and if there’s like.
334 00:48:08.730 --> 00:48:19.590 Elaine Louden (she/her): If there was legislative support towards like subsidizing those and was just wondering about how that how all of these amazing solar panels came about in the state, if you were able to speak on that.
336 00:48:21.780 --> 00:48:23.130 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: that’s great that is.
337 00:48:23.220 --> 00:48:34.830 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: I love the comparison from Ohio we we see, so the legislature, we do have a program in Connecticut that does subsidize solar.
338 00:48:36.480 --> 00:48:38.550 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: A residential and commercial solar.
339 00:48:40.800 --> 00:48:41.490 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: and
340 00:48:42.570 --> 00:48:44.520 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: not going to remember the year correctly.
341 00:48:45.750 --> 00:48:51.450 Sam D she/her Sierra Club: But there, there was also a major program called solar arise Connecticut that.
The department and read bank greenbank I believe kicked off that really brought that program to municipalities and allowed and I participated in it, I live on the starboard.

When the solar eyes campaign came to us harford what happened is they, they asked you know. People said they wanted to get solar panels and basically it was like a group purchase and so, once they signed up you know they signed up 50 customers, the cost would be a certain amount they set up 100 it would be less than 150 it'd be less.

And so, this rolled out in towns all over the stage and use that state subsidy in order to do it, although individuals can get solar and get a state subsidy and there were federal subsidies, I at the time as well.

And so that’s kind of how that kicked off I, you know as an advocate here in Connecticut.

We look often to Massachusetts and say why why don’t we have as many as them, they have an incredibly robust solar program and they may even say, or you know, have their their directions that they point to.

You know, we have not barely scratched the surface about 20% of all rooftops are suitable for solar certainly nowhere near there.

You know, and there is definitely a tension.

In terms of between.

The utilities and solar advocates who want to see much more robust rooftop solar the utilities would prefer utility scale solar, so it they own it.

And so you know from the Sierra club perspective, the more rooftop and distributed solar, we can have the more power in the hands of people and now as battery storage comes down to be pairing that with battery means that will be far more resilient.

Locally when you know climate driven storms come and another thing we know there’s also a tension between.

On.
Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Solar and green space and so distributed energy, you know, having as much rooftop solar as possible, you know, will help really if we can prioritize that and make it a priority will help relieve that and I’m really looking forward to I’m expecting very soon from one of our.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: One of our allies in this space and analysis of.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: parking lots throughout the state which is a huge opportunity for solar that the state has analyzed and so we’re going to see some analysis of that soon from this partner organization so watch out for that it’s going to be exciting.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: News on that front.

Robert Dubrow: So do you mean open parking lots where you would have solar canopies above the lot is what you’re doing.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: yeah and just to point to Massachusetts again they have you know their incentive program is different than ours in terms of solar canopies, and so it makes it more.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: financially feasible.

Robert Dubrow: To do.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Also, know in Massachusetts they have along the.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: side of highways.

You will see, solar panels.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: We had a bill passed.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: In 2019 that required.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Our State Department state departments so deep and.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: department transportation to put together a list.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: of locations where solar panels along side of the highway or department transportation own properties could go and.
Sam D she/her Sierra Club: there’s maybe some things happening in the background, but there’s been zero information that I’ve seen on that, since that bill passed.

Robert Dubrow: yeah that’s really interesting one thing for people who don’t know about this issue so solar panels could use up a tremendous amount of land so it’s a land use problem so that’s where these.

Robert Dubrow: You know these innovations like putting them but park parking lots are long roots where it’s not really a land use issue.

Robert Dubrow: There was a proposed.

Robert Dubrow: 15 acre solar farm that would have involved basically cutting down 15 acres of forest and a lot of environmentalist actually opposed of that project, because you know so it’s a conflict between losing the forest and hitting up or pedals, so this is this this lens use issues real.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: yeah there’s I mean solar’s and the only landry’s issue as well, like you know development for housing so there’s a lot of threats to.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: To.

Robert Dubrow: For us, and and open spaces.

Robert Dubrow: like that, and I think you know.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: In a case by case basis it’s important.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: To.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: To see what the impact is.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: But if our programs recognize this and instead prioritize rooftop and prioritize impervious surfaces like parking lots we can avoid some of that.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: But because of the way we’re it’s set up right now that is it’s much more economical to put up a massive solar array than is she put up you know, a single.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: array on a rooftop.
Robert Dubrow: yeah so I just to clarify what I what I was saying wasn’t meant to be in a solar energy.

Robert Dubrow: hanging out, you know, so what one of the issues that have to be dealt with.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: Absolutely it’s a real tension.

Heidi Richard: um so that’s reminded me of something that we only have a couple minutes left so might be a longer answer and I have to plead ignorance and I don’t know the status of this they know that they were proposals and maybe if we can happen.

Heidi Richard: For.

Heidi Richard: Wind energy and the sound Do you know anything about that.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: So, not in the sound.

Heidi Richard: um so.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: You know the analysis of wind is that I’m like Texas, where the wind apparently blows like crazy we don’t have a lot of onshore wind opportunities here in Connecticut and the sound similarly is not a good place to locate turbines.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: At least for like a utility scale.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: situation, however, the, off the coast of 15 miles south of.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: martha’s vineyard which would be way off and.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: People wouldn’t see them like you would, if they were in the sound which, which is attention attention um.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: We have what’s described as being the Saudi Arabia of wind, because of the whole stream I guess the JET stream, the Gulf Stream, this is not my area, but the wind is blowing all the time.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: And because of the continental shelf it doesn’t like in the Pacific that.

Sam D she/her Sierra CLub: You know drops off by precipitously but in this area it’s it’s easy enough to anchor.
Sam D she/her Sierra Club: wind turbines and so that is where the development is expected to happen Connecticut authorized procurement of 2000 megawatts of offshore wind and actually.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: accepted our fees for 800 and.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: Change 803 I know i'm, not forgetting the number megawatts of offshore when that to be constructed, so that is in the in the hopper, I guess, but not yet not yet available.

Robert Dubrow: Right well thanks so it's 10 o'clock.

Robert Dubrow: I realized I forgot to mention that this seminar is being sponsored by the School of Public Health sustainability committee so i'll mention that at the end of this, and thanks very much Sam it was very informative.

Sam D she/her Sierra Club: i'm glad to be here Thank you so much for inviting me.

Heidi Richard: Yes, I echo Thank you so much, it was great to meet you.

Heidi Richard: Bye all right.