MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Requiring Chemical Facilities in the Coastal Boundary to Address Emergency Planning Risks Associated with Climate Change

SB 343- AAC the Effects of Climate Change on the Safety Plans for Certain Chemical Facilities in the State and Residents of Distressed Municipalities

JUSTIFICATION
Coastal communities are especially at risk from the impacts of climate change, including coastal flooding, sea level rise, and increased extreme weather events. These events do not discriminate between industrial and residential sites, and they can lead to catastrophic emergencies when rising storm waters breach chemical plants, power plants, and other sensitive facilities.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, residents of Houston, TX were exposed to the uncontrolled release of more than 4.5 million pounds of toxic air pollution from refineries and chemical plants across 13 counties, including a variety of known human carcinogens. The flooding that followed the storm led to an explosion at a local chemical plant, which forced thousands of residents within a 1.5-mile radius of the site to evacuate their homes. Plant operators and local government officials failed to notify first responders about the potential health and safety risks following the flood. Subsequently, first responders were ill-prepared to deal with the hazardous chemicals they would encounter on site. Many quickly became ill and were left unable to respond, due to not being properly equipped with the appropriate safety measures. In order to prevent similar emergencies in Connecticut, CCE strongly supports updating emergency response plans for chemical facilities to include flooding, sea level rise and other climate change impacts that may arise in low lying areas and in close proximity to waters of the state.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

- Requires any chemical facilities identified by the DEEP Commissioner to be at risk due to flooding, severe weather events or sea level rise to update their hazard mitigation and evacuation plans to address such risks;

- Requires chemical plant operators to submit such plans to the local emergency planning committee within 60 days of the effective date of this act.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS SB 343 AAC THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE SAFETY PLANS FOR CERTAIN CHEMICAL FACILITIES IN THE STATE AND RESIDENTS OF DISTRESSED MUNICIPALITIES

Citizens Campaign for the Environment is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment.