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Letter to L&R Committee

Dear Committee, members,

I wanted to give you all a little background on this item prior to the meeting. Attached are the draft ordinance and some supporting testimony

In the latter part of 2025, a member of the public, along with the Director of the Environmental Protection Board (EPB) Bob Clause, came before us and asked that we use our authority to update outdated language in our code and to better define and separate the duties currently assigned to the EPB. That request was thoughtful, intentional, and rooted in both experience and best practice. I met with Director Quinones before starting working on the ordinance in 2025 he also supported this idea. I met with him last month and again he supported it. I forwarded him the current draft ordinance for him to go over with the various land use boards as I want to make sure we get this right.

Attached are the original comments from Bob Clausi, Executive Director of the EPB, who has over two decades of experience in this field. In his testimony, he clearly supports the creation of a stand-alone Conservation Commission and explains why this structure would better serve the City of Stamford.

I shared with Director Clause the draft ordinance which he and the cities lawyer helped to draft. This ordinance was approved by the entire board before being presented to you, my distinguish colleagues.

Here is a link to the item from the 31st board. Unfortunately, I introduced it at the end of the term, and we ran out of time and were unable to get a proper draft ordinance created on time. Here is a link to the old history.[LU31058 - Stamford Board of Representatives](#)

At its core, this ordinance does something very simple but very important:
It creates a dedicated Conservation Commission for Stamford.

Right now, conservation responsibilities are technically assigned to the EPB, but in practice, they are limited. As Mr. Clausi points out, the EPB's time and resources are largely consumed by its statutory inland wetlands and floodplain responsibilities, leaving little capacity for broader conservation planning, research, or advisory work. .

By establishing a separate Conservation Commission, we give the City a focused body whose job is to look at natural resources, climate resilience, open space, and environmental health through a proactive lens, not as an afterthought, but as part of how we plan and grow.

This is not a new or untested idea. In fact, it aligns Stamford with statewide best practices. The Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions

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recommends that municipalities maintain a separate Conservation Commission, rather than combining those responsibilities with other boards.

It also aligns directly with the Stamford 2035 Comprehensive Plan, which calls for the "creation of a stand-alone Conservation Commission" to help guide climate action, sustainability, and environmental protection efforts.

Beyond planning, this creates real, practical value for the City:

- It allows for better coordination across departments
- It provides expert input to our land use boards
- It strengthens our ability to pursue environmental and climate initiatives
- And it opens the door to partnerships, education, and community engagement

Importantly, this ordinance also cleans up outdated and conflicting language in our code by clarifying that the Environmental Protection Board (EPB) serves as the City's Aquifer Protection Agency.

We all know that Stamford continues to face significant development. The question is not whether we grow (that is a must) but how we grow. A Conservation Commission helps ensure that we are planning ahead, protecting what matters, and making informed decisions that balance development with environmental stewardship.

This is a thoughtful, common-sense step forward. It responds directly to a request brought before us by the public and administration, aligns with our long-term planning goals in the 2035 plan, and brings Stamford in line with best practices across the state.

I welcome any questions or concerns prior to the meeting and would love some co-sponsors.

Additional information; [NEW Conservation Commission Fact Sheet | Resilient Connecticut | Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation \(CIRCA\) | University of Connecticut](#)

Connecticut town commissions and boards can play a pivotal role in building climate change resilience into local decision making. Conservation Commissions have the authority to advise land use boards and can play a role in increasing climate resiliency by advocating for nature-based solutions for problems like flooding, excessive heat, erosion, shoreline stabilization or poor water quality. Learn more about the role and authority of Conservation Commissions and how natural resource conservation can help build climate

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resilience in CIRCA's new Factsheet "Conservation Commissions and Natural Resource Resilience."

Thanks!

Karen