

**Conservation, Energy, & Environment Committee (CEEC) Report
Public Health, Safety & Environment Subcommittee, October 8, 2025
Submitted by Paula Jones, Chair, CEEC**

Highlights (August & September):

Update: Addition of Bloomfield to the federally designated “Highlands Region”: In July the CEEC requested that the Council’s Governance, Policy, & Economic Development Subcommittee consider recommending to the full Council a resolution to include Bloomfield in the federally designated “Highlands Region.” This opportunity was brought to CEEC’s attention by the Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy. (Details regarding the Highlands Region and benefits of inclusion were provided in July, and are again included on page 2 of this report.)

The resolution was discussed at the July 7th Governance Subcommittee meeting, and the Full Council approved the resolution at its July 14th meeting. (The West Hartford Town Council also approved a resolution to be added to the designated region.)

The Housatonic Valley Association is collecting Town’s resolutions and will work with DEEP on the required next steps to get towns added. There is no further action required from the Town at this point.

Review of Tree & Solar Regulations: The Committee will be reviewing an existing Tree ordinance with Director Jon Colman. We are also looking at the Town’s positioning on solar through a review of existing policies and checklists, as well as considering what might be included in new regulations.

Upcoming Events:

Shred Day with Small Electronics Recycling: November 8th, 9 to noon. For confidential paper shredding, we are limiting each household to 3 bankers’ boxes or equivalent sized bags. There is no limit on small electronics. The location will be the Bloomfield High School parking lot where the event was held last spring.

October 22nd: 2025 Trees for Bloomfield Photo Contest registration closes. The Bloomfield Public Arts Commission is co-sponsoring this year. (<https://bloomfieldct.gov/830/Trees-For-Bloomfield-Photo-Contest>)

The CEEC meets the second Thursday of each month from 4:30pm – 6pm via a hybrid meeting format (in person at Town Hall, Conference Room 5). Next scheduled meeting – November 13, 2025

Background Information: Bloomfield Inclusion in the Highlands Region Resolution

The federal Highlands Conservation Act (the Act) was created in 2004 to protect the 3.4 million-acre landscape that stretches along the Appalachian ridge and hills of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The purpose of this act is to protect clean drinking water, forests, and farms, as well as wildlife. Designated Highlands Region communities have access to federal grant money for land protection opportunities that advance the Act's objectives.

In December, 2022, the Act was reauthorized, and the area in Connecticut eligible for inclusion was extended. This expanded area now includes the Traprock/Metacomet Ridge. East Granby (along with Farmington and Thomaston) sought and received the Highlands Region designation as of November 25, 2024. Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy (TRLIC) worked with the town of East Granby to apply for and receive the designation.

TRLIC was asked to approach Bloomfield and West Hartford, its other member towns along the Traprock ridgeline, about applying for the designation. The CEEC voted at its February 13, 2025 meeting to support pursuing designation. There is no downside; the upside is potential access to federal funding. Since federal Highlands Conservation Act grants can be combined with CT Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) grants, designation could be beneficial in the future should the town seek to conserve land that meets the criteria of these grants.

To move ahead, the Town Council needs to state (through a letter or a resolution) Bloomfield's willingness to be added to the Highlands Region. That document would be forwarded to the Connecticut DEEP which would make a recommendation to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which would make the final determination.

If voted on and approved by the Town Council, the CEEC and the TRLIC is happy to assist Building and Land Use Director Jon Colman in taking the next step with Connecticut DEEP. Mr. Colman is in support of pursuing this designation.