



PA 23-206—sSB 896
Environment Committee

**AN ACT CONCERNING TREE REMOVAL ON PROPERTIES UNDER
THE CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

SUMMARY: This act requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to report annually, beginning by January 1, 2024, to the Environment Committee on the department’s hazardous tree removal activities in state parks during the prior year. It specifies the minimum information that DEEP must include in the report.

Separately, the act makes it a state goal to increase, by January 1, 2040, the total percentage of environmental justice communities that are covered by tree canopy by 5% of the total area of those communities with a current tree canopy cover of less than 40%. It does this explicitly to ensure state residents equitably enjoy open space and tree cover benefits. By law, an “environmental justice community” is (1) any U.S. census block group, as determined by the most recent census, for which at least 30% of the population consists of low-income people who are not institutionalized and have an income below 200% of the federal poverty level or (2) a distressed municipality (CGS § 22a-20a).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the tree canopy provision takes effect October 1, 2023.

HAZARDOUS TREE REMOVAL REPORT

Under the act, DEEP’s annual report must include the following information:

1. each state park where a hazardous tree removal project was done in the prior calendar year;
2. the total acreage for each project;
3. an explanation of whether the projects consisted of removing fallen trees or cutting down trees;
4. the reasons for each project;
5. the total cost for each project and the funding sources;
6. a description of the removal of any hazardous tree or group of hazardous trees with unique characteristics like age, caliper, species, canopy, or aesthetics; and
7. a description of any planned or anticipated hazardous tree removal project in any state park for the next calendar year.