



## **2024 Environmental Summit Speaker Bios**

### **Kevin Budris**

Kevin Budris is a co-founder and Senior Counsel & Program Director at Just Zero, a non-profit organization that works alongside communities, policymakers, organizers, and others to implement just and equitable solutions to our waste crisis. Prior to Just Zero, Kevin was a Senior Attorney in the Zero Waste Program at Conservation Law Foundation and previously worked at the National Environmental Law Center, where he brought citizen enforcement lawsuits against polluting landfills and incinerators.

### **Alicea Charamut**

Alicea Charamut assumed the role of Executive Director of Rivers Alliance in May of 2019. Prior to that she was the River Steward for the Connecticut River Conservancy. While her career began working in genomics during the height of the Biotech boom, she found an outlet for her passion for rivers through Trout Unlimited serving in various roles at the chapter and state level. As a fly angler, paddler and rower, water is as central to her play as it is her work. Alicea also serves as a volunteer in several capacities as Secretary of the Fisheries Advisory Council, on the Advisory Board of the Connecticut Institute of Water Resources, and a former member of the Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality. She is also the Co-Chair of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group. Alicea holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences from the University of Connecticut.

### **Senator Christine Cohen**

Christine Cohen represents residents in the 12th District towns of Branford, Durham, East Haven, Guilford, Killingworth, Madison, Middlefield, North Branford, and Rockfall. She is the Senate Chair of the Transportation Committee, Vice-Chair of the Banking Committee, and is a member of the General Law, Children, Finance, Revenue & Bonding committees. She is currently serving her third term and was first elected in 2018 when she was appointed as Senate Chair of the Environment Committee. Senator Cohen has focused her public policy energies on protecting Connecticut's environment, preventing gun violence, making Connecticut healthier, and strengthening the state's economy. She led the passage of a ban on single-use plastic bags beginning in 2021, an update to the bottle bill to reduce waste and pollution, and the Connecticut Clean Air Act to significantly reduce transportation emissions. Senator Cohen created and co-chairs the Coastal Caucus, a bipartisan group of lawmakers who focus on the issues affecting coastal towns, cities, and waterways. She uses her private-sector business experience working at Fortune 100 companies like Stanley Black & Decker and Georgia Pacific to co-chair the legislature's Bioscience Caucus, which seeks to strengthen and promote Connecticut's robust life sciences and biotech industries. Senator Cohen continues to work in a bipartisan manner to tackle Connecticut's toughest challenges.

### **Nathan M. Frohling**

Nathan Frohling is The Nature Conservancy's Director of External Affairs. He leads federal and state government relations for the Chapter and oversees its climate and energy policy work. Passage of CT's law committing the state to a zero-carbon electricity supply by 2040 is a highlight of his legislative work. Nathan's leadership on the Long Island Sound Blue Plan helped achieve legislative adoption of this precedent-setting measure in 2021. Believing that engaging the business community in advocacy for important climate and clean energy legislation, Nathan launched the CT Energy Future Initiative. As an active member of the State's Commission on Environmental Standards Nathan is helping assure the viability of offshore renewable wind energy by also assuring marine life is protected in the process.

### **Ann Gadwah**

Ann Gadwah is the Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator at Sierra Club Connecticut. Raised in the mountains of Western Massachusetts, Ann's heart has always been with nature and the environment, translating into activism and a career in public policy. Beginning in 2018, she served as both the Political and Chapter Chair of Sierra Club Connecticut. On staff as an organizer and lobbyist since 2021, she works to help implement good environmental policy and engage supporters in the movement. Her passions include environmental justice, ecosystem and wildlife preservation, zero waste, and outings. Ann currently resides in New Hartford with her husband, son, dog, three cats, and four chickens.

### **Ulysses B. Hammond**

Ulysses Hammond is the Interim Executive Director of the Connecticut Port Authority, a quasi-public agency, responsible for the maritime economic development of Connecticut's deepwater ports and 35 small harbors. He is also responsible for the transformation of the Port of New London into a world class heavy lift intermodal transport marine terminal that is a marshalling hub for the staging and pre-assembly of wind turbines for America's new offshore wind industry. Ulysses has decades of executive experience leading public and private institutions in Michigan, Washington DC, and Connecticut. As Vice President for Administration and Legal Affairs at Connecticut College for 15 years, he managed campus administration and general business operations and led the college's \$100 million capital improvement project. This included the construction of the Science Center (with geothermal heating and cooling systems). He has served on numerous boards, most recently the North Atlantic Ports Association, Chelsea Groton Bank, the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut, Connecticut Mirror (board chair), and the Innovation Center of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut (Co-chair). Ulysses earned a B.A. from Kenyon College, an M.P.A. from Wayne State University, and a J.D. from Wayne State University Law School.

### **Senator Tony Hwang**

Senator Tony Hwang is serving his fourth term representing Connecticut's 28th Senatorial District, which includes the towns of Easton, Fairfield, Newtown, and portions of Bethel. Tony is Chief Deputy Republican Senate Leader and Ranking Republican Leader on the Transportation Committee, the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, the Subcommittee on Bonding in the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee. He is also a member of the Planning and Development Committee. He co-chairs the bipartisan Bioscience Caucus and has been honored as a legislative champion by the CT League of Conservation Voters. An outspoken champion for the environment and personal empowerment to create a more sustainable habitat, he has fought

for responsible, proactive legislation to support environmental and climate change initiatives. Tony has been recognized for his efforts to encourage and connect young people to opportunities in exploring their potential in public service, internships, apprenticeships, and entrepreneurships. Born in Taiwan to parents who escaped Communist China, he strongly believes in civic participation and democratic governance. Hwang is a proud graduate of Cornell University.

### **Anne Hulick**

Anne Hulick is the Connecticut Director of Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund and focuses on passing health-protective policies aimed at mitigating climate change, protecting our waters, and reducing exposure to toxic chemicals at the state and federal levels. Anne started her career as a critical care nurse, advancing to nursing director. She holds a BSN from the University of Hartford, an MS in administration from UCONN. She pursued a Juris Doctorate in order to combine environmental health policy and the law and was admitted to the CT Bar in 2007.

### **Rob Lafrance**

Rob Lafrance has his JD from the Quinnipiac University School of Law and his BA from the University of Arizona. He was formerly the Director of Governmental Affairs or DEEP. He is currently the Director of Policy for the National Audubon Society. He serves as the commissioner and former vice-chair of the town of Clinton's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. He is a Member of DEEP's Environmental Justice Working Group; Member of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Advisory Committee; Member of the Financing and Funding Adaptation and Resilience and the Resilient Infrastructure and Nature Based Solutions Working Groups of the Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)

### **Tony Leiserowitz, Ph.D.**

Anthony Leiserowitz is the Director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and a Senior Research Scientist at the Yale School of the Environment. He is an internationally recognized expert on public climate change beliefs, attitudes, policy support, and behavior, and the psychological, cultural, and political factors that shape them. He conducts research worldwide, including in the United States, China, India, and Brazil. In 2020, he was named the second-most influential climate scientist in the world (of 1,000) by Reuters. He is also the host of Climate Connections, a radio program and podcast broadcast each day on more than 700 stations nationwide.

### **Joyce Leiz**

Joyce is a non-profit administrator with 30 years of development, finance and program administration experience. She joined Connecticut Audubon in July 2018 as director of development and was advanced to chief operating officer in 2022. Before coming to Connecticut Audubon, Joyce was director of development at a New York City hospital where she successfully managed \$100 million in grant-funded awards, including the completion of grant-related projects and implementation of new grant-funded programs. Throughout her career, Joyce has focused her efforts for the protection of the environment and the improvement of healthcare. Joyce has a BA in Anthropology from the City University of New York at Queens College.

### **Sharon Lewis**

Sharon Lewis is currently the Executive Director of the CT Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice (CCEEJ) where she advocates for people of color who are facing disproportionate exposures to pollution, including through a successful recent campaign to secure investments in water infrastructure for environmental justice communities in Hartford who had suffered uninsured flood losses. Prior to this role, she spent twenty years in the reinsurance and insurance industry responding to major natural catastrophes including Love Canal and the Bhopal, India Union Carbide tragedy.

### **Stephen Lewis**

Stephen is the Chair of the Greater Hartford Sierra Club. He also serves as Chair of the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club's Political Committee and is an active member on their Legislative Committee. He is a speaker and advocate for switching to renewable energy solutions and electrifying everything. Steve worked for thirteen years in the Connecticut General Assembly as Administrator of the Public Health Committee. He earned his B.A. in Political Science at Trinity College in Hartford and his M.B.A. from the University of Connecticut, and also received Executive business training at Stanford University Graduate School of Business. Steve retired in 2023 after a successful career as a Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at UnitedHealthcare. He is currently a member of the South Windsor Energy Committee. Steve is a longtime and active Scoutmaster and past Chair of the Hockanum River District of the BSA and teaches scouting leaders about conservation opportunities in CT. He is a Connecticut Audubon Master Naturalist who now teaches in their program.

### **Dr. Mark Mitchell**

Dr. Mark Mitchell co-chairs the National Medical Association's Council on Environmental Health and Climate Change, and the Governor's Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC). He is an Emeritus Associate Professor of Climate Change, Energy, & Environmental Health Equity at George Mason University, where he founded the Climate and Health Equity Fellowship. As a preventive medicine physician with over twenty years in public health, he directed the Hartford, Connecticut Health Department and served as Deputy Director of the Kansas City, MO Health Department. Dr. Mitchell, the Founder and Senior Policy Advisor of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, has worked extensively with environmental justice communities for fifteen years. He has served on U.S. EPA and FDA advisory committees and received numerous awards for community and environmental health leadership. Dr. Mitchell earned his bachelor's and medical degrees from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and his Master of Public Health from The Johns Hopkins University.

### **Amy Paterson**

Amy joined the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) in 2010 as its first Executive Director. She co-chairs the State of Connecticut Natural Heritage, Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board. She was a member of the Environment Committee for the Lamont/Bysiewicz Administration transition team, the Forests Sub- Group of the Governor's Council on Climate Change, and the Policy on Resilient Forests for Connecticut's Future (PRFCT Future) Working Group. Amy is a member of the Working Lands Alliance Steering Committee and the Board of Directors of the Keney Park Sustainability Project. Prior to CLCC, Amy worked for The Trust for Public Land. She worked over twenty years as a land use attorney, and served as a staff lawyer with the U.S. Department of Justice.

### **Representative Christine Palm**

Christine Palm is in her third term representing the 36th House District of the General Assembly, including the CT River towns of Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Haddam. As Vice Chair of the legislature's Environment Committee, Palm recently helped pass legislation including an Environmental Justice law, the Connecticut Clean Air Act, and an updated Bottle Bill; and two sessions ago she successfully shepherded the PFAS ban bill through the House. Before that, Christine Palm successfully championed a multi-year effort to ensure that climate change education will now be taught in all public schools as part of the science curriculum. She led legislation to address the problem of hydrilla and other harmful plants by establishing the Office of Aquatic Invasive Species. Palm, who is Majority Whip-at-Large, was named 2023 "Legislator of the Year" by the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, was a recipient of the national Walter Cronkite Award for Environmental Education, and received the 2023 Outstanding Public Official Award from the Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District. She is passionate about demystifying the government process in order to motivate activist groups, advocates, and citizens.

### **Nicole Rivard**

Nicole Rivard is the editor-in-chief and a Media/Government Relations Manager. Nicole started working at Friends of Animals in 2013. She brings 27 years of journalism experience to FoA's *Action Line* and to the front lines— protesting and documenting atrocities against animals exploited by the fur, hunting & entertainment industries, as well as the Bureau of Land Management's mismanagement of America's wild horses. Nicole also helps direct FoA's legislative outreach. She enjoys photography, wildlife watching and wild places. But her happiest place is with horses at New Canaan Mounted Troop, her home away from home.

### **Charles Rothenberger**

As Save the Sound's in-house Climate and Energy Attorney, Charles focuses on climate policy and legislation to ensure clean air and a robust green economy for Connecticut. With more than 15 years of experience working on environmental, energy, and land issues, Charles is well versed in lobbying before the CT General Assembly, and appearing before state agencies and municipal boards and commissions in regulatory proceedings. Prior to joining Save the Sound, he served as law clerk at the Connecticut Appellate Court. He holds a JD from the UConn School of Law and an MA in public policy from Trinity College, and has been admitted to the Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts bars.

### **Denise Savageau**

Denise Savageau is an environmental planner and has worked in the environmental field in Connecticut for over 35 years and has extensive knowledge of land use policy and regulation. She started her career working for the Hartford County Soil and Water Conservation District and served as the Conservation Director for the Town of Greenwich for 20 years. Now "retired", she is an active volunteer at the local, state, and national level on soil and water conservation and is currently President of the Connecticut Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) and chair of the CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation. Her current focus is on soil health, watershed management, wetlands protection, drinking water supply protection, local food systems, and nature-based solutions to climate change mitigation and resiliency. She represents CACD on the EPA Long Island Sound Study Citizens Advisory Committee, the Connecticut Water Planning

Council Advisory Group, and was a member of the Governor's Council on Climate Change Natural and Working Lands Group. Denise has served on several NGO boards including Rivers Alliance of Connecticut and the CT League of Conservation Voters and was recently elected to her local zoning commission. She lives in Old Lyme with her husband, a professional wetland scientist and avid birder, who shares her passion for the environment.

### **Haley Schulman**

Haley is the National Site Coordinator for Food Rescue US. After years of experience in the hospitality and events industry where she witnessed enormous amounts of wasted food, Haley redirected her focus towards supporting a more sustainable food system. She nurtured her interest in local foods by volunteering at local community farms and as a food rescuer with Food Rescue US. The immediate positive impact of providing nutritious foods to her community led her to take on a larger role with Food Rescue US. As National Site Coordinator, Haley coaches new Food Rescue US sites to develop their own grassroots food recovery operations. She has been with the organization for 3 years and in addition to her national work, she also co-manages Food Rescue US - Fairfield County, the organization's oldest and largest organization rescuing over 4 million lbs of food in 2023.

### **Mark Scully**

Mark is President of the nonprofit People's Action for Clean Energy and is actively engaged in promoting Connecticut's transition to clean, renewable energy. He retired in 2017 from a thirty-five-year career as an actuary and from 2018 to 2020 oversaw the restoration of a local historic mansion, the Ensign House in Simsbury, CT, into a mixed-use commercial property using energy efficient technology and practices. Over his career, Mark served as chief actuary of several international insurance companies and is the founder of Willis Towers Watson's property-casualty consulting practice in Germany. Mark received his B.A. in Mathematics and German from Washington and Lee University and his M.A. in International Economics and Foreign Policy at the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University. He is a Fellow of the Casualty Actuarial Society, Chair of the Simsbury Sustainability Committee and a Certified Passive House Consultant. Mark lives in West Simsbury, CT.

### **Mara Shulman**

Mara Shulman is a Senior Attorney for CLF's Zero Waste Project. In this role, she works to advance CLF's Zero Waste advocacy, litigation, and legislative work in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Prior to joining CLF, Mara advocated on the behalf of young people, first as a court-appointed delinquency attorney and later as a mental health and special education advocate. She completed a graduate studies degree in Sustainable Development at the School for International Training and graduated from Western New England University School of Law as a Public Interest Scholar. As someone deeply committed to advancing positive change and resolving conflict through collaboration, Mara has completed advanced training in alternative dispute resolution strategies, such as mediation, nonviolent communication, and restorative justice.

### **Nick Skeadas - CEO**

Prior to working Curbside Compost, Nick worked for almost a decade in asset management with Northern Trust. Prior to Northern Trust, Nick worked in investment consulting and the consumer product industry. Nick was on staff as a Teaching Assistant for the Academy of Grenoble in France. He holds a BA in Economics from Bates College and an MBA from Fordham University. Nick also completed the Master Composter Program at the University of Connecticut College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources. Honor memberships: Phi Kappa Phi, Omicron Delta Epsilon, FMA International Honor Society.

### **Representative Jonathan Steinberg**

Jonathan Steinberg was first elected in 2010 to represent the 136th Assembly District of Westport and is now serving his seventh term. He currently serves as House Chair of the Legislature's Energy & Technology Committee, and previously co-chaired the Public Health Committee. He also serves on the Transportation Committee. Steinberg is former chair of the Pension Sustainability Commission and the M.O.R.E. Commission. A marketing executive in NYC for over 25 years, Jonathan was employed by several Fortune 100 companies such as Bristol-Myers Squibb, American Home Products/Wyeth, and Revlon, and several healthcare organizations such as Mount Sinai Medical Center and The Jewish Home Lifecare System, where he was Senior Vice President for Marketing and Communications. Jonathan graduated with a B.A. from Yale University, and an M.B.A. from N.Y.U.'s Stern School of Business.

### **Kimberly Stoner**

Dr. Kimberly Stoner is Director of Advocacy for CT NOFA: the Northeast Organic Farming Association of CT and Coordinator of the CT Environmental Rights Amendment Alliance. She is also on the Steering Committee of the CT Climate Crisis Mobilization. She is an Agricultural Scientist Emerita at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, where she worked as an entomologist for 35 years.

### **Louise Washer**

Louise Washer serves on the board of the Pollinator Pathway, which she helped create in 2017, and which has since spread to over 300 towns across the region. She also serves as president of the Norwalk River Watershed Association, as a member of the Norwalk Mayor's Water Quality Committee, and on the steering committee of the Hudson-to-Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership (H2H).

### **Jayson Velazquez**

Jayson is dedicated to ensuring a Just Transition is achieved by advancing equitable climate, clean energy, and energy justice policy and programs. Jayson is currently Acadia Center's Climate and Energy Justice Policy Associate, where he applies his values to his work in Connecticut across energy efficiency and building decarbonization, utility innovation and accountability, clean grid and renewable energy infrastructure, and clean transportation. He holds a Master of Environmental Science from Yale School of the Environment and a Bachelor of Science in Environment and Natural Resources from The Ohio State University. Jayson also serves on the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Board as the Environmental Representative, on the Board of Directors for the Keney Park Sustainability Project, and on the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council's Energy Subcommittee.