



2023 Environmental Summit Government Official Speaker Bios

Governor Ned Lamont

The Honorable Ned Lamont was first elected in 2019 and is serving his second term as Governor of the state of Connecticut. Governor Lamont has consistently prioritized clean air and water, renewable energy, and protecting public health during his administration's first term. In 2022, Governor Lamont introduced and signed major environmental bills to combat climate change, reduce carbon emissions, and protect clean water. His administration has prioritized achieving a 100% clean electric grid, investing in clean transportation, and preserving open space. Tackling the waste crisis is a major concern for his administration, which is seeking solutions on how to get mixed materials out of the waste stream, increase recycling, and reduce the burden of polluting facilities in environmental justice communities.

Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz

Sworn in January 2023, Susan Bysiewicz is serving her second term as Connecticut's 109th Lieutenant Governor. Lt. Gov. Bysiewicz's first priority is to grow good-paying jobs and investing in the state's future. She has demonstrated tremendous leadership on the environment, most notably putting Connecticut on a path to a sustainable "green economy" with groundbreaking investments in clean renewable energy. As Secretary of State from 1999 to 2011, she was a leading voice for Connecticut residents and small businesses. As a state legislator, Bysiewicz wrote legislation to ensure that women with breast cancer had proper care, and wrote the law to ban lobbyists from giving gifts to legislators. She has helped over sixty companies access millions of dollars in capital, expand their businesses, and create thousands of jobs in Connecticut. Susan Bysiewicz graduated from Middletown High School, Yale University and Duke Law School.

DEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes

Katie Scharf Dykes is the Commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP). She was nominated by Governor Ned Lamont to serve as the Commissioner of DEEP. She was confirmed February 20, 2019, and renominated by Governor Lamont to lead DEEP in December 2022. Katie previously served as Chair of the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) from 2015-2018, and Deputy Commissioner for Energy at Connecticut DEEP from 2012-2015. Katie also served as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, Inc. (RGGI) from 2014 to 2017, and is currently serving her second term as Chair. RGGI is a multi-state effort focused on reducing carbon emissions from electric generating facilities. Katie joined CT DEEP in March 2012 after prior service as Deputy General Counsel for the White House Council on Environmental Quality and as a Legal Advisor to the General Counsel for the U.S. Department of Energy. She is a graduate of Yale College and the Yale Law School.

Representative Joe Gresko

First elected to the CT General Assembly in 2015, Representative Joe Gresko has since been appointed House Co-Chair of the Legislature's Environment Committee. Born and raised in Stratford, Joe Gresko received a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from Central Connecticut State University. He had a successful career as a radio news reporter/anchor at WICC/WEBE, winning many Associated Press awards and twice the Ellen Abrams award. After working in the City of Bridgeport administration, Joe served as the deputy chief of staff for State of Connecticut House Speaker Jim Amann. He currently works on green initiatives ranging from energy efficiency and renewable energy to urban forestation and sustainable growth. He also volunteers at the CT Food Bank, the annual Housatonic River clean-up, and is a member of Protect Your Environment (PYE), among other community organization. Joe received the Legislator of the Year Award from the Bridgeport Regional Business Council in 2019

Representative Christine Palm

Christine Palm is in her third term representing the 36th House District of the General Assembly, including the Connecticut River towns of Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Haddam. As Vice Chair of the legislature's Environment Committee, Palm recently helped pass legislation crucial to our state, including the CT Clean Air Act, and an updated Bottle Bill, and she successfully shepherded the PFAS ban bill through the House. Christine Palm successfully championed a multi-year effort to ensure that climate change education will now be taught in all public schools, making Connecticut the second state to require climate change education as part of the science curriculum. Last session, she led legislation to address the problem of hydrilla and other harmful plants by establishing the Office of Aquatic Invasive Species. When not advocating for the environment and women's rights, Palm gives Sexual Harassment Prevention trainings to the corporate, academic and non-profit workplace.

Representative Geraldo Reyes

Geraldo Reyes Jr. has represented the 75th Assembly District of Waterbury in the Connecticut House of Representatives since 2016. Rep. Reyes currently serves the leadership role of Deputy Speaker. He served as the Chair to the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus from 2021-2022. Reyes serves on the Appropriations, Environment, and Transportation Committees as well as the Joint Committee on Legislative Management. Rep. Reyes has a long record of involvement in his town and has dedicated his career to the prosperity of the people of Waterbury. Reyes is dedicated and passionate about addressing environmental concerns and improving the city of Waterbury especially if it helps those who are most vulnerable. The representative has strong ties with community and nonprofit organizations as an advocate for mental health issues, fairness for equity, and social justice in our state. Rep. Reyes has been recognized throughout the state for his community involvement and received countless leadership awards over many years.

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. Jonathan was elected to Westport's RTM, the town's legislative body, in 2003. During his seven-year tenure, he was elected Deputy Moderator three times and, and chaired four RTM committees. Jonathan has also served on a number of appointed town groups including the Town Plan Implementation Committee, the Wastewater Management Committee, and its Septic System Education Taskforce. A marketing executive for over 25 years, working primarily in New York City, Jonathan was employed by several Fortune 100 companies such as, Bristol-Myers Squibb, American Home Products/Wyeth, and Revlon, and for 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 from Yale University with a B.A. in Psychology, and N.Y.U.'s Stern School of Business with an M.B.A. in Marketing with Honors. He is also certified to teach History/Social Studies in Connecticut public schools as a graduate of the Department of Higher Education's Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) Program.

SPECIAL GUEST BIO

Matt Plourd

Matt Plourd is a 20 year old community organizer, climate advocate, and graduating senior at the University of Connecticut studying Political Science, Environmental Studies, and Theatre. Matt has been organizing his neighbors in his hometown of Newington, CT since 2018, working to raise awareness of gun violence & student-debt issues and elect common-sense, progressive leadership to the state legislature and local offices. He joined Sunrise in 2020 after realizing the connection between the climate crisis and Hurricane Maria, which devastated the island of Puerto Rico in 2018 and touched his family by resulting in one of the largest instances of climate-related migration in U.S. history. Matt is endlessly hopeful about the future and always excited to work with other young people statewide to put CT on a path towards greater equity, sustainability, and justice. In addition to organizing with Sunrise CT, Matt also leads environmental justice advocacy and initiatives in the Undergraduate Student Government at UConn. Representing 18,000 undergraduate students, he has primarily focused on the campaign to fully decarbonize the University of Connecticut system by 2040.