Dear Esteemed Members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity, a national conservation nonprofit, I am writing to urge you to raise the climate-friendly food purchasing bill for the 2022 legislative session. Too often, in setting policy for environmental protection, the role of food and procurement in meeting climate goals is neglected.

Food production contributes about one-third of global greenhouse gases. And the pollution from industrial agriculture harms the most vulnerable communities. A 2021 study showed that air pollution from agriculture kills nearly 18,000 people in the United States annually. Meanwhile animal products, which carry the highest carbon footprint of foods, are also the leading source of ammonia pollution. Yet Connecticut's climate emissions and air pollution reduction goals do not include food targets.

Effective policy provides opportunities to mitigate the climate pollution associated with the production of high emissions food . States, municipalities and institutional purchases influence what types of food are produced, and how, in which regions, and at what scale. Given the overwhelming contribution of food production to the climate crisis, every institutional purchase matters, even in non-agricultural regions and beyond the rural framework.

Connecticut must address greenhouse gas emissions associated with the food it serves. To address air pollution and mitigate the emissions associated with food purchases and agricultural impacts, it is vital to look beyond the energy and transportation sectors. Food is an enormous source of pollution and climate emissions both nationally and globally, and Connecticut has a chance to make a difference.

To get serious about reducing food-related emissions and air pollution, Connecticut needs to:

- Make a commitment to reduce food-related emissions by 25% (relative to 2015 baseline) by 2030.
- Measure, track and report state-level emissions.
- Establish best practices policy for reduction of food-related emissions.

Connecticut can be a leader in greenhouse gas reduction — but the state would not be alone; in taking this modest step forward, you would join New York City and Washington, D.C. in reducing food emissions by 25% by 2030 in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Key opportunities to lower climate and air pollution driven by food procurement are:

- Measure emissions related to food served across state agencies (in government cafeterias, prisons, hospitals and university dining halls).
- Set emissions reduction targets that include food procurement as a key metric.
- Provide best practices recommendations for reducing food waste and food packaging.
- Set targets for reducing foods with the highest carbon footprints (such as beef, lamb and dairy) replaced by foods with the lowest carbon footprints (vegetable and legumes).

Models already exist for tracking, measuring and reducing food-related emissions by integrating land-use and emissions factors, supply chain data, carbon opportunity costs and other metrics. What is needed is political will. In addition to resources such as the Cool Food Calculator from the World Resources Institute, the Center for Biological Diversity would be happy to assist with data and resources to smoothly track progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through climate-friendly food purchasing plans.

We strongly encourage you to take this opportunity to become a model of good food policy.

Please consider raising this bill or including its language in the larger air emissions bill.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Molidor
Center for Biological Diversity