

# Many local towns achieve sustainable status

WILLIMANTIC — Sustainable CT, a statewide initiative that inspires and supports communities in becoming more efficient, resilient and inclusive, announced its 2019 certified communities this week.

A total of 32 municipalities met high standards in a broad range of sustainability accomplishments to qualify for certification.

Sustainable CT is managed under the leadership of the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic.

Coventry, Guilford, Mansfield, Middletown, New Haven, Simsbury, South Windsor, Vernon and Windham have achieved Silver Certification, the highest honor in the program.

Another 23 municipalities are being recognized with Bronze Certification: Ashford, Bethany, Bloomfield, Brookfield, Burlington, Cornwall, Darien, East Hartford, East Lyme, Essex, Groton, Manchester, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Saybrook, Portland, Scotland, Waterford, West Haven, Weston, Wilton as well as Woodbury.

Certification lasts three years, with the state's first cohort of municipalities certified in 2018. Collectively, 47 municipalities — more than 27 percent of the state's communities — have earned Sustainable CT certification.

Certified communities span every county and include some of Connecticut's largest cities and smallest towns.

"We are thrilled to recognize a growing number of communities who are deeply committed to sustainability," said Laura Francis, first selectman of Durham and co-chairperson of the Sustainable CT Board of Directors.

"These towns have shown great lead-

*We are thrilled to recognize a growing number of communities ...*

*Laura Francis*

ership in completing many actions that increase sustainability while also saving money, promoting health and increasing residents' connection and sense of place."

All 32 communities certified in 2019 demonstrated significant achievements in nine sustainability impact areas, ranging from community building, thriving local economies and vibrant arts and culture to clean transportation and diverse housing.

In addition, all certified communities addressed diversity, inclusion and equity when implementing sustainability actions.

The certification submissions were rigorously evaluated by independent experts and Sustainable CT partners.

"Sustainable CT-certified communities are models for all forward-looking local governments," said Joe DeLong, executive director of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM).

"They are doing the important work of ensuring more resilient, equitable communities and more vibrant economies."

CCM will hold an awards ceremony to recognize Sustainable CT-certified towns at their annual convention in early December.

Sustainable CT has seen strong momentum and growth as a valuable, high-impact program. Eighty-nine towns have registered for the program, more than half of all municipalities in the state.

"We are so inspired by this year's certified Sustainable CT communities," said Lynn Stoddard, executive director of the program and director of Eastern's Institute for Sustainable Energy. "From empowering teens to lead environmental projects to offering reduced-cost produce grown on municipal property to low-income community residents, we're seeing such thoughtful and innovative local action."

*For more information, visit [www.sustainablect.org](http://www.sustainablect.org).*