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**Testimony of David Sutherland – Director of Government Relations
Before the Environment Committee – March 8, 2013**

**In Support of Bill 1010 - AAC SEA LEVEL RISE AND THE FUNDING OF PROJECTS
BY THE CLEAN WATER FUND**

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, I would like to express our strong support for Bill 1010. This bill would require sea level rise (SLR) to be considered in the design of sewage treatment projects funded by the state's Clean Water Fund. This concept was unanimously endorsed by the General Assembly's Shoreline Preservation Task Force.

As sewage treatment facilities are designed or redesigned, it is essential that engineers factor in not only storm events, but also the fact that the rate of SLR in Long Island Sound has been increasing significantly. Many scientists are predicting that this SLR acceleration will continue, so that we will see rises of water level between two to five inches per decade. This will provide a "higher platform" for storm waves, intensifying the destruction they can cause to sewage treatment facilities and other structures.

The news story excerpts at the end of this testimony describe the devastating impacts caused when sewage treatment plants were overwhelmed by Storm Sandy.

This legislation would not necessarily require the implementation of SLR mitigation measures in the construction or upgrading of facilities. Rather the bill is intended to require project design proposals to include an assessment of 1) the vulnerability of the new or upgraded facility to SLR over its projected life span, 2) measures which could mitigate direct damage from rising waters or from storm surges intensified by SLR, and 3) the feasibility of implementing such measures. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection would then determine whether to require the measures to be included in the actual construction.

We recommend that the language for the bill be amended as follows for added clarification:

(a) The commissioner shall maintain a priority list of eligible water quality projects and shall establish a system setting the priority for making project grants, grant account loans and project loans. In establishing such priority list and ranking system, the commissioner shall consider all factors he deems relevant, including but not limited to the following: (1) The public health and safety; (2) protection of environmental resources; (3) population affected; (4) attainment of state water quality goals and standards; (5) consistency with the state plan of conservation and development; (6) state and federal regulations; [and] (7) the formation in municipalities of local housing partnerships pursuant to the provisions of section 8-336f; and (8) the necessity and feasibility of implementing measures [identified in such project that are] designed to mitigate the impact of a rise in sea level over the projected life span of such project;

WHICH SUCH IMPACT, MITIGATION MEASURES, AND THEIR FEASIBILITY SHALL BE ASSESSED IN PROJECT APPLICATIONS. The priority list of eligible water quality projects shall include a description of each project and its purpose, impact, cost and construction schedule, and an explanation of the manner in which priorities were established. The commissioner shall adopt an interim priority list of eligible water quality projects for the purpose of making project grants, grant account loans and project loans prior to adoption of final regulations, which priority list shall be the priority list currently in effect under subsection (c) of section 22a-439.

Excerpts from news articles after Storm Sandy:

AP Associated Press

October 30, 2012

Conn. treatment plants discharging raw sewage

Millions of gallons of untreated or partially treated sewage spilled into Long Island Sound and other Connecticut waterways during flooding and power outages caused by superstorm Sandy, officials said Tuesday.

The state Department of Public Health urged people to stay away from floodwaters because they may be contaminated by sewer system discharges or sewage backups on private properties.

Discharges of untreated or partially treated sewage into waterways were reported in Branford, Bridgeport, East Lyme, Fairfield, Greenwich, Ledyard, New Hartford and New Haven, according to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

The New York Times

November 29, 2012

EAST ROCKAWAY, N.Y. — The water flowing out of the Bay Park sewage plant here in Nassau County is a greenish-gray soup of partially treated human waste, a sign of an environmental and public health disaster that officials say will be one of the most enduring and expensive effects of Hurricane Sandy.

In the month since the storm, hundreds of millions of gallons of raw and partly raw sewage from Bay Park and other crippled treatment plants have flowed into waterways in New York and New Jersey, exposing flaws in the region's wastewater infrastructure that could take several years and billions of dollars to fix.

In New Jersey, workers at the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission plant, the fifth largest in the country, had to evacuate as floodwaters surged in and wastewater gushed out. The Middlesex County Utility Authority plant in Sayreville, N.J., let about 75 million gallons of raw sewage a day flow into Raritan Bay for nearly a week before power was restored.



Post-Sandy sewage raises water safety fears

October 31, 2012

(CBS News) Superstorm Sandy overwhelmed sewer systems, pouring tens of millions of gallons of raw sewage into waterways along the East Coast. Health departments in several states are now warning residents about tap water.

In Connecticut, 15 to 20 million gallons of partially treated sewage is believed to have flowed into Long Island Sound when pumping stations were overwhelmed by the storm surge.