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TESTIMONY FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING, FEBRUARY 27, 2013

To: The Chairmen: Sen. Terry Gerratana and Rep. Susan Johnson
And to the Members of the Committee

RE: SB 352 AAC MUNICIPAL SEWERAGE SYSTEMS

Rivers Alliance of Connecticut is the statewide, non-profit coalition of river organizations, individuals, and businesses formed to protect and enhance Connecticut's waters by promoting sound water policies, uniting and strengthening the state's many river groups, and educating the public about the importance of water stewardship. Our 450 members include almost all of the state's river and watershed conservation groups, representing many thousand Connecticut residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **SB 352 AAC MUNICIPAL SEWERAGE SYSTEMS**. We oppose the bill as written, but recognize that it is a placeholder for a constructive effort to solve a municipal sewage- treatment dilemma.

The chief reason for our opposition is that the bill transfers the authority for creating and overseeing a community wastewater remediation system to the Water Pollution Control Authority. This is a significant alteration of statutory responsibilities; and most WPCAs are not qualified to do this work.

The motive for the bill, as I understand it, is an effort by officials in Old Lyme to comply with environmental and health standards for the treatment of wastewater by beach-association residential communities. The town is seeking an innovative solution involving a variation on the traditional community septic system. We believe the approach is positive. We would be happy to assist in reaching a solution.

Other coastal towns are facing similar sewage dilemmas. The confusion of statutory authorities, especially in the law for Decentralized Wastewater Districts, makes progress difficult. This bill is not the answer. But perhaps a better answer will emerge in negotiation.

Sincerely,

Margaret Miner, Executive Director