



**Testimony of Connecticut Fund for the Environment
Before the Committee on Environment**

In support of HB 6653, AN ACT CONCERNING DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION REGULATORY STREAMLINING TO ASSIST MUNICIPALITIES.

Submitted by Lauren Savidge
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Connecticut Fund for the Environment works to protect and improve the land, air and water of Connecticut. We use legal and scientific expertise and bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and members of the Committee on Environment,

Connecticut Fund for the Environment (“CFE”) submits this testimony in support of Proposed HB 6653, An Act Concerning Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Regulatory Streamlining to Assist Municipalities. If passed, Section 1 of this legislation would require municipal water pollution control authority plans to be consistent with the conservation and development policies of the state (“State Plan” or “Plan”). Additionally, Section 3 would allow any person, along with an applicant, to request a hearing on an application under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (“CWA”).

The State Plan serves as official state Executive Branch policy on matters involving land and water resources conservation and development. Recognizing the importance of having a comprehensive development strategy for the state, the Plan establishes six essential principles for development projects to follow, including: (1) revitalizing regional centers; (2) expanding housing opportunities to accommodate various household needs; (3) concentrating development along major transportation corridors; (4) conserving and restoring the natural environment; (5) protecting the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health; and (6) promoting integrated planning across all levels of government. It is critically important for our state’s quality of life and economy to promote smart growth and Transit Oriented Development while preserving our natural resources.

One task of a municipal water pollution control authority is to plan and delineate the boundaries of planned or anticipated sewerage facilities. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 7-246(b). Both the 2005-2010 State Plan and the Draft 2013-2018 State Plan¹ emphasize that sewer systems should only be

¹ The 2013-2018 State Plan is currently being reviewed by the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development.

expanded when there is a demonstrated need and only at a level that directly respond to that need without encouraging more development. Draft State Plan, 20; 2005-2010 State Plan, 77. Municipal water pollution control authorities should be required to plan consistent with the State Plan to ensure they follow principles of smart growth emphasized by the Plan.

Additionally, it is important to allow any interested parties, along with an applicant, to request a hearing on applications under Section 401 of the CWA. DEEP grants applications under this section to entities conducting an activity that may result in a discharge into the navigable waters. It is important to have enough information about a project to thoroughly review to determine if a permit should be granted and a hearing can be the best way to obtain that information.

These applications are essential to protect the integrity of our state waterways. The State of Connecticut has designated more than 1000 river miles and 6000 acres of larger water bodies in the State as “impaired,” or not meeting water quality standards, and unable to support beneficial uses such as fish habitat and water contact recreation. Allowing interested parties to submit a petition with 25 or more signatures to request a hearing would improve the application process and ensure DEEP has sufficient information in granting permits to discharge into the state waterways.

We respectfully request that language be added to this section that allows any person to submit a petition signed by twenty-five or more persons *or* a petition signed by an organization representing twenty-five or more persons.

Thank you for your time and consideration on these matters.

Sincerely,

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