



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

February 13, 2013

To: Senator Steve Cassano, Co-Chairman
Representative Jason Rojas, Co-Chairman
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: **Proposed Bill 705, AA Expanding the Powers of Municipal
Stormwater Authorities**

The HBRA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with about nine hundred (900) member firms statewide employing tens of thousands of CT's citizens. Our members, all small businesses, are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry and to consumers. While our membership has declined over the course of our seven-year Great Recession from its high of 1,500 members, we build between 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in the state each year.

We oppose SB 705, as we did in 2012 (see HB 5492) and in 2010 (see section 10 of SB 388, raised in the Environment Committee that year). In 2012, you passed HB 5492 11-9 and the bill then died in Finance. In 2010, section 10 of SB 388 was stricken from the bill in the Environment Committee by a 16-9 vote. We urge you to take no action on this year's version, SB 705. The creation of a new body politic, as SB 705 contemplates, and its associated new authority to raise taxes, impose charges, borrow money via bonds, enter onto private property and lien property is unnecessary to address an issue (i.e., stormwater control) that is already very well regulated.

Extensive stormwater regulations have been adopted by the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection and the agency will finish a complete rewrite of its stormwater general permits for construction activities this year. Also, we do not know of a single municipality that does not require stormwater to be controlled via soil erosion and sediment control regulations. And the federal government has recently adopted new requirements for stormwater control under the U.S. Clean Water Act. **Thus, stormwater is regulated by three levels of government. Do we really need a new government entity, one with significant powers, to address an already well-regulated issue?**

If prior bills are any guide, the new authority to be held by the proposed body politic is broad and open-ended, as are the new liens on property for failing to pay "charges" that are undefined. A new lien on property could have super priority lien status (due to being imposed by a body politic), which could upset the credit financing system currently in place for material suppliers and the lending industry. Given the ongoing difficulties of obtaining credit, this new lien hurdle could make the extended credit crisis we face worse. We urge you to not pursue this unnecessary legislation, and thank you for considering our comments.