TESTIMONY

DATE:    February 19, 2014

TO:         Environment Committee
            Connecticut General Assembly

FROM:   Karl J. Wagener
        Executive Director

RE:         Raised Bill 72, AAC Liability for Growing of Running Bamboo

The Council on Environmental Quality has examined the running bamboo question and recommends that you prohibit, by statute, its sale and planting.

The Council is aware that last year’s legislation requires containment for future plantings, and that the raised bill imposes liability for anyone who lets their bamboo run out of control. However, the Council concluded that these measures are not completely adequate.

Based on compliance data for other environmental laws, it is highly doubtful that 100 percent compliance can be achieved. Some people will remain ignorant of their responsibilities, and some will prove to be just irresponsible. Council members have personally observed instances of running bamboo growing in wetlands and other non-landscaped areas; this is likely to keep occurring until running bamboo is abandoned as an ornamental plant.

The fact that running bamboo can in theory be contained is not the most important point. By way of comparison: the General Assembly has prohibited the sale and planting of more than 50 species by statute. We as a state do not tell people that they may plant Phragmites (reed) – which can be considered ornamental – or kudzu as long as the plants are grown in containers or are otherwise contained. Both species spread by runners or rhizomes, and you have correctly prohibited them completely. The Council recommends that you do the same for running bamboo.