



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE DEVIN R. CARNEY
TWENTY-THIRD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Environment Committee
Public Hearing
February 27, 2015

Testimony in Support of House Bill 5709, An Act Concerning The Department of Energy And Environment Protection's Authority To Designate Additional Stormwater Sewer Systems Outside Of Urban Areas

Co-Chairs Senator Kennedy & Representative Albis, Vice Chairs Senator Moore & Representative Arconti, Ranking Members Senator Chapin & Representative Shaban, and esteemed members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 5709, An Act Concerning The Department of Energy And Environment Protection's Authority To Designate Additional Stormwater Sewer Systems Outside Of Urban Areas.

Small towns, including the towns in my district, understand the importance of protecting the environment. Preserving open space is a source of pride to the townspeople there – this can be evident in the support for “The Preserve” and Lyme’s extensive open space program. Folks care deeply for the environment, but overly burdensome taxes in Connecticut have caused many to flee the land they love for other states. Unfunded mandates, such as this MS4 General Permit, will simply force small towns to raise taxes without showing significant benefits. To put it simply – we have had enough and cannot afford to be taxed anymore.

The DEEP’s MS4 General Permit goes beyond the requirements of the EPA, which will overly burden our small towns with yet more unfunded mandates. The small town of Lyme and others like it (“Tier 2 towns”) have done an admirable job balancing their budgets and are often faced with uncertainty regarding the state’s fiscal condition. The unpredictability of state funding for public safety, education, library services, youth service bureaus, etc has caused small towns to worry. This MS4 General Permit has only added to those concerns.

The MS4 General Permit requires new fees, reporting requirements, mapping requirements, testing requirements, outreach campaigns, and the development of management plans. These small towns simply don't have the current resources available to take on this extensive process.

Connecticut is taxed enough, but many small towns have effectively kept property taxes low. Lyme has one of the lowest mill rates in the state due to effective management. Raising property taxes now will only encourage more people to flee the state and could actually reduce the overall tax base.

I encourage the DEEP to work with small towns (including some "Tier 1 towns") – not against – and allow them the opportunity to develop programs that are well within their budget and in accordance with federal EPA standards. Massachusetts omits "Tier 2" small towns because the state follows federal EPA standards. If the standards are good enough for Massachusetts, then why are they not good enough for Connecticut?

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Devin Carney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

Devin Carney
23rd District State Representative
Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Westbrook