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House Bill 6739, An Act Concerning Specifications for Pipes Used by the Department of Transportation
Transportation Committee
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The Utility Contractors Association of Connecticut represents contractors, suppliers and vendors in the utility and site work construction industry in Connecticut. UCAC contractor members perform work to improve and enhance the utility infrastructure in the state. House Bill 6739 could severely and adversely affect several UCAC members who employ numerous workers in Connecticut.

UCAC is **opposed** to House Bill 6739 and respectfully requests that the Transportation Committee not act on the bill.

House Bill 6739 would require the Department of Transportation to ensure that all pipe materials used in storm drainage applications for state roads meet certain specifications. The bill specifies that when used in bridge construction, pipes must be designed according to AASHTO bridge design specifications, and the design service life for storm drain and cross drain applications must be 75 years and the design service life for side drain applications must be 50 years.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation already has in place a process for approving materials for certain applications on state roads and highways. Construction contractors, engineering and design professionals, materials manufacturers, distributors and suppliers all have the opportunity to participate in or have their interests heard by ConnDOT's Standard Specifications Committee. That process has been in place for many years and has worked well. If a product or material is worthy and meets the committee's standards, it will be accepted. Subjecting design specifications to the legislature, where policy decisions are made, could disrupt the process for making design decisions that affect the safety of the traveling public. House Bill 6739 would take away from experts an authority and function properly delegated to a state agency.

There are many factors a professional engineer must consider before determining the kind of pipe best suited for any particular application. When designing a water or wastewater project,

the professional engineer must also consider factors such as structural integrity (strength), soil compatibility, permeability, ease of repair, abrasion resistance, constructability and cost, to name just a few. By ignoring, and thus eliminating these other considerations, House Bill 6739 has the effect of dictating to the professional engineer the type of pipe that must be specified on storm drainage projects. This could create unintended consequences and open the door for additional specifications for other materials specified by the legislature. Additionally, it could expose professional engineers to potential liability for a product that was not selected based on their judgment and expertise.

AASHTO bridge design specifications may not be applicable to underground structures, so the bill could create ambiguity and uncertainty in the industry. Industry products are currently manufactured to meet or exceed AASHTO standards and have been accepted by the Standard Specifications Committee. A professional engineer is still needed to make the technical decision as to whether to use a specific product based on design standards and the proper materials for a specific application.

Bills similar to House Bill 6739 have been introduced in several other states and have been considered and rejected.

For any questions or additional information, please contact Matthew Hallisey, UCAC Executive Director, at (860) 978-7346.