



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

In support of part, in opposition of part of Bill 141

Submitted by Leah Schmalz, Program Director
February 24, 2016

Connecticut Fund for the Environment (CFE) is a non-profit environmental organization with over 5,500 members statewide. The mission of CFE, and its bi-state program Save the Sound, is to protect and improve the land, air, and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. We use legal and scientific expertise and bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.

Dear Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, and members of the Committee on Environment:

Connecticut Fund for the Environment, and its bi-state program Save the Sound (CFE/Save the Sound) submits this testimony in partial support of and partial opposition of SB 141. The bill provides for a variety of changes regarding inland wetlands issues. While some provisions, are acceptable (definition to include hydric) and others are manageable (the boundary issue and state agency time-frame), the sections on proceeding in court rather than an appeal to Department of Energy and Environmental Protection; allowing people to sue wetlands agencies for failure to perform their duties; and taking enforcement authority away from DEEP, should be removed.

DEEP has done remarkable work with ever dwindling resources, and while we recognize their time is scarce, we do not believe eliminating DEEP's oversight in this instance is a proper area for potential savings. It would have significant and detrimental impacts on local commissions.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "LS", is written over a horizontal line.

Leah Lopez Schmalz

142 Temple Street, Suite 305
New Haven, CT 06510
203.787.0646 ext. 121
203.787.0246 fax

lschmalz@ctenvironment.org
www.ctenvironment.org