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**Testimony of David Sutherland – Director of Government Relations
Before the Finance Committee – February 26th, 2016**

**In Opposition to Section 148 of SB 11
AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PURPOSES.**

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, I would like to express our opposition to Section 148 of SB11, which would reduce by half the bond authorizations that this committee and the legislature approved last year for grants-in-aid to municipalities to encourage low impact design of green municipal infrastructure to reduce nonpoint source pollution. We urge the administration to launch this program and assess what we anticipate will be a high demand for it before reducing its authorization.

There is a large and urgent demand for funds to implement innovative stormwater management projects. Next month, The Nature Conservancy will unveil a new feature on our website that will list information on over **200 ready-to-go green infrastructure non-point pollution projects in just ten** Connecticut towns. These projects were developed with local officials and only need funding to proceed to the permitting stage.

Connecticut has made critical progress in reducing Nitrogen and other excessive nutrients and pollutants in our most prominent “point sources” of pollution – our sewage treatment plants. However, we still have levels of pollutants flowing into our rivers and Long Island Sound from non-point pollution sources – water from stormwater runoff or groundwater discharge that has been contaminated by fertilizers, septic systems, roadway residue and chemicals, soil erosion, agricultural wastewater, and other diffused activities or causes. This polluted stormwater runoff degrades our rivers and Long Island Sound and their fisheries and recreational benefits, and in many cases overtaxes our sewage treatment plants.

In the context of stormwater management and non-point pollution, “green infrastructure” includes a variety of techniques and practices that reduce runoff by using soils, vegetation, and natural designs to infiltrate, evapotranspire, and/or recycle stormwater. Green roofs planted with vegetation, porous pavement, rain gardens and vegetated swales can retain and infiltrate rainfall, help filter air pollutants, reduce energy demands, and connect people with their neighborhoods.



This site in Seaside Village in Bridgeport was designed with infiltration galleries and vegetated areas to relieve a serious flooding problem on the adjacent parking lot. It cost less than other possible solutions and provides an amenity for nearby residents.

(over)

Extensive use of green infrastructure is becoming a hallmark of truly modern cities.



Portland, Oregon uses these natural techniques, as well as initiatives such as a reward system for ratepayers who keep stormwater from leaving their property, a Green Streets program, and a stormwater utility fee. The city's extensive

monitoring program and reports indicate significant increase in water retention and reductions in runoff. Such success is greater in the summer but is still substantial even in the winter.

Cheonggyecheon is a 7.0 miles long, modern public recreation space in downtown Seoul, South Korea. The project is on the site of a stream that flowed before the rapid post-war economic development caused it to be covered by transportation infrastructure. The project started in 2003 and opened in 2005, has become popular among residents and tourists. Fish species that had not been seen in 50 years have returned to the river



Seoul downtown before.....



And now

Green Infrastructure is a cost-effective method of reducing critical pollution and flooding problems facing many communities and providing important amenities to residents. We urge you to maintain the authorization levels you approved last year for this initiative and to work with the administration to initiate this grant program.