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Chester, Clinton, Cromwell,  
Deep River, Durham, East Haddam,  
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Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield,  
Middletown, Old Lyme,  
Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook

February 15, 2017

Senator Cassano, Senator Logan, and Representative Lemar, Chairs  
Planning and Development Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Ave  
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: HB 6926 An Act Permitting Municipalities to Impose a Buyer's Fee on the Conveyance of Real Property

Dear Co-Chairs Cassano, Logan, and Lemar:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 6926, "An Act Permitting Municipalities to Impose a Buyer's Fee on the Conveyance of Real Property" on behalf of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG). The chief elected officials of the RiverCOG voted unanimously to support this concept as part of its legislative agenda at its December 28, 2016 meeting.

House Bill 6926 will provide municipalities the ability to collect a conveyance fee on certain real property transfers for the purposes of protecting and stewarding valuable natural resources and maintaining important ecological, agricultural, and recreational assets. When the real estate market improves, development pressure on greenspaces increase. Revenues from conveyance fees will increase with sales, providing the funds necessary to protect and improve new and existing lands.

The conveyance fee is a tool that municipalities can choose to impose on themselves to protect important natural spaces and improve recreational opportunities. The conveyance fee will allow growing municipalities to protect community character and livability and maintain attractive open and recreational spaces. Also this optional source of revenue is important in Connecticut, because municipalities have no ability to charge impact fees to mitigate the impacts of development and support the continued livability of a growing community.

RiverCOG greatly depends on its natural and recreational resources to maintain its economic health and vitality. Tourism is a significant component of our regional and state economy and the conveyance fee can help support a landscape that continues to attract visitors and business. We urge you to support this important legislation that encourages and facilitates conservation and stewardship of our state's vital open spaces.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel S. Gold".

Samuel S. Gold, AICP  
Executive Director