



**FOR THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY OF RIVERS ALLIANCE OF CONNECTICUT
February 15, 2017**

RE: HB 6926 AN ACT PERMITTING MUNICIPALITIES TO IMPOSE A BUYER'S FEE ON THE CONVEYANCE OF REAL PROPERTY. (Support)

To: Chairmen Rep. Roland Lemar, Sen. Steve Cassano, and Sen. George Logan;
And honorable Members of the Committee:

Rivers Alliance of Connecticut is a statewide, non-profit coalition of river organizations, individuals, and businesses formed to protect Connecticut's waters by promoting sound water policies, uniting and strengthening the state's many river groups, and providing education on water stewardship.

We urge the Committee to support this bill, which gives municipalities the option of using a modest conveyance tax on buyers of real property for the purposes of conserving open space. Many towns have difficulty maintaining the open-space funding they would like to have. This year may be particularly difficult. Budget lines for many services and amenities may be cut back.

Open space typically serves as an asset to towns, providing recreation and a healthy environment for residents, and attracting property buyers. It makes sense for a buyer to chip in a little extra to support a municipality's effort to conserve open space. Rivers Alliance serves on the CT Natural Heritage, Open Space, and Land Acquisition Board, as well as the watershed lands work group of the Water Planning Council. Land protection and water protection go hand in hand. Open space bordering on or surround water bodies is the surest and most cost-effective way to maintain high-quality water resources.

Thanks for your attention. We would be pleased to answer questions.

Margaret Miner, Executive Director

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