FOR THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY OF  
RIVERS ALLIANCE OF CONNECTICUT  

February 8, 2017

RE: S.B. No. 519  AA AUTHORIZING THE SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT AND INVEST IN CERTAIN NONCORE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES.

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 educating the public about the importance of water stewardship.

To: Sen. Ted Kennedy Jr., Sen. Craig Miner, Rep. Mike Demicco, Chairmen; And Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

Rivers Alliance opposes this bill -- SB 519 -- as written.

We have a strong interest in protecting Class I/II lands, which are source-water lands owned by a water company. (Similar lands not owned by a water company are sometimes called Class I/II-like lands. They, too, are highly valued for conservation.) Vegetated open space surrounding a water source is the single best protection for water quality.

This bill as written would appear to allow a wide range of new activities not now permitted under the Regional Water Authority charter. In order to protect water, it is vitally important that these activities do not take place on Class I/II lands. This bill does not exclude that possibility.

We and others in the conservation community have been in conversation with the Regional Water Authority with respect to their aims. It is our understanding that new language relating to these matters may be offered sometime in the future. In the meantime, we urge you to oppose SB 519.

Thanks for your attention.
Margaret Miner, Exec. Dir, 203-788-5161 rivers@riveralliance.org