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March 15, 2018

Senator Ted Kennedy, Co-Chair
Senator Craig Miner, Co-Chair
Representative Mike Demicco, Co-Chair
Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: SB 339 An Act Extending the Prohibition on Municipal Ordinances Concerning Invasive Plants

Dear Honorable Co-Chairs Kennedy, Miner, and Demicco:

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) respectfully submits the following testimony on SB 339 An Act Extending the Prohibition on Municipal Ordinances Concerning Invasive Plants. RiverCOG strongly supports this bill's extension of the time where municipalities are prohibited from adoption of ordinances that would allow the sale of invasive species, despite language in the existing statutes. As note, another approach to take would be to remove the ability for municipalities to exempt themselves from the prohibitory language of the existing statute altogether, rather than extending the dates of what in effect is a moratorium on the adoption of such ordinances.

Species brought to Connecticut and sold in Connecticut have become invasive, destroying natural habitats, clogging waterways, and requiring expensive removal. The cost of invasive plants to Connecticut has not been calculated, but is easily on the order of millions of dollars per year.

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Region is plagued by invasive water chestnut (*trapa natans*), which is kept in check by countless hours of work by RiverCOG and volunteers. *Trapa* crowds out native plant species and wildlife, clogs boat motors, and stabs bathers' feet, if its seeds are stepped upon. Let's make sure we do the most we can to prevent another *trapa* from invading Connecticut.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding my testimony.

Sincerely,

Samuel S. Gold, AICP
Executive Director