TESTIMONY OF RIVERS ALLIANCE OF CONNECTICUT
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
March 16, 2018

Bill No. 347 AN ACT CONCERNING CONSENT ORDERS ENTERED INTO BY THE COMMISSIONER OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

(Oppose)

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

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.

Rivers Alliance strongly opposes this encore effort to undermine DEEP’s ability to require polluters to come into compliance with law. The agency too often tolerates ongoing threats and harm to the environment for years, and then a consent order, if ever delivered, is a fairly weak enforcement tool.

We are most familiar with performance problems with wastewater treatment plants and the state’s three hazardous waste treatment plants, which have Clean Water Act permits. A significant number of the facilities regularly or frequently fail to meet their permit requirements and standards for years, sometimes even decades. Consent orders are few and far between. Even then compliance may be unduly delayed.

This bill would give violators the right to delay compliance even longer by going to court. A proponent of the bill might counter that it given DEEP, too, the right to go court. But DEEP already has that right. That’s inherent in a consent order.

Thanks for your attention.

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