

# Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-338

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

**Title:** FUNDS FOR COMBATTING INVASIVE SPECIES.

**Vote Date:** 3/22/2018

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/16/2018

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Environment Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Provide funding from the Community Investment Act to lake authorities to combat invasive species.

### Substitute Language:

Adds additional language to the original raised bill of (1) grant shall not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars and (2) any lake shall have public access.

### Amendment A Language:

Insert "or associations" after the word "authorities" in lines 21 and 22. Strikes "have public" and insert "provide for access by members of the general public" in line 25. Strike the word "access" in line 26. Inserts after line 50, language that, requires the Auditors of Public Accounts to conduct a forensic accounting of the expenditure of funds from the community investment account and to report to the Appropriations and Environment Committees.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Representative Bill Buckbee 67<sup>th</sup> District:** Candlewood Lake makes up the largest body of water in Connecticut. This bill allocates 25% of the Community Investment Account to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection as a grant to lake authorities to control invasive species. is the best option for Connecticut and the future of clean water.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Donna Hamzy, Advocacy Manger, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities:** Further dilution of the CIA (Community Investment Act) undermines its effective support of, among other things, the preservation of open space. CCM encourages the Committee to find other streams of funding to assist lake authorities in combating invasive plant and animal species.

**Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director, Connecticut Land Conservation Council:** The Council strongly agrees that invasive species pose a serious and growing threat to lakes, as well as other aquatic and terrestrial environments throughout the state. Using Community Investment Act (CIA) funds to address this problem is not the solution and will only serve to undermine the efficacy of the program. Specifically, the four CIA sectors are already operating with less funding due to years of continuous sweeps of the account; the proposal would divert funds from DEEP's already underfunded Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program; and DEEP is already stretched thin with scarce, if any, resources to administer another grant program. Planning and Development is currently considering Senate Bill 181 that would enable but not require 4 municipalities with the option to establish through their own local public input/decision making process to fund acquire, preserve, and maintain municipal open space, water resources, and farmland through a limited buyers conveyance fee program.

**Leah S. Glaser, President, Connecticut Preservation Action:**

While the Connecticut Preservation Action strongly supports the efforts and funds to combat invasive species and other environmental initiatives, we object to the further thinning of these funds beyond those purposes originally intended. Our cities and towns have only the Community Investment Act (CIA) to protect, preserve, reuse, recycle and revitalize their best resources.

**Genese Leach, Policy Manager, Audubon Connecticut:** Community Investment Act funds are intended to support investments in Open Space, Farmland/Dairy Support, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing. The CIA is already operating with less funding due to years of continuous sweeps and cuts. A better solution is needed to address invasive species in our state.

**Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association:**

Combating invasive species in lakes is a real concern, Community Investment Act funds are for open space protection. DEEP staffing is already insufficient to take on the administration of a new funding program.

**Alicea Charamut, River Steward, Connecticut River Conservancy:** Thank you for trying to find a creative way to fund the important work of invasive species control. Aquatic plant

biologist have noted that the Connecticut River is being seriously threatened by rapidly spreading invasive species. It is imperative that we have access to available funding but the CIA has insufficient funds in its core priority of open space.

**James Sirch, President, Hamden Land Conservation Trust:** Combatting invasive species is very important to maintain biodiversity but funds should not be taken from the already underfunded Open Space and Watershed and Land Acquisition Program. State conservation goals already set are not being met. Local funds from municipalities should be used.

**Terry Jones, Chairman, Working Lands Alliance:** We encourage alternative sources of funding for combating invasive species. Working Land Alliance appreciates the importance of combating invasive species but we oppose the use of Community Investment Act funds for this purpose. Since its passage in 2005 the CIA has stayed true to its original purpose. The State of Maine is implementing a lake and river protection boat sticker program. All fees collected will be dedicated to two accounts: Department of Environmental Protection's Invasive Aquatic Plant and Nuisance Species Fund and Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife's Lake and River Protection Fund.

**Jane Montanaro, Co-Director, CT. Trust for Historic Perservation:** Protect the integrity of the Community Investment Act by not putting additional strains and no more cuts .

**Reported by: Pamela Bianca**

**Date: 4/9/2018**