Dear Environment Committee member,

Connecticut enacted its first Sewer Right to Know Act (SRTKA) in 2012. However, events like the recent spills of over five million gallons of sewage into the Naugatuck River show it is time to strengthen existing laws.

I support H.B. 1530 and applaud your efforts to protect public health. The raised bill has a few issues that need clarification and inclusion.

EXPAND THE DEFINITION OF SEWAGE SPILL

Sewage spill is currently defined as the "diversion of wastes from any portion of a sewage treatment plant or collection system in this state." This definition needs to include:

•   All discharges of untreated/partially treated sewage, including combined sewer overflows.
•   A definition of "large" sewage spills that should be treated like a toxic waste spill

ADD ELECTRONIC REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE

Electronic reporting should be required to provide better information about a sewage spill, such as:

•   The location and estimated volume of discharge.
•   The steps taken to contain the discharge.
•   Reasonable public health, safety, or welfare concerns or environmental concerns, as well as precautions that members of the public should take.
•   Notification to the public and adjoining municipalities that may be affected.
•   A map of sewage spills and combined sewer overflows on DEEP's and DPH's websites, which must be kept up to date.

REQUIRE QUICK REPORTING AND ANNUAL REPORT

Anyone responsible for a sewage spill should be required to report the incident within two hours to DEEP and the Department of Public Health. Notification of the spill shall also be provided within two hours to the public.

DEEP and DPH should be required to post reported information on their websites within five days and compile an annual report that includes total number, volume, and duration of discharges; whether the discharge is untreated or partially treated; and the remedial responses taken to mitigate impacts and avoid further discharges.

Sincerely,
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