Bill No.: HB-7348
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING BONDING AUTHORIZATIONS FOR CLEAN WATER FUND PROJECTS.
Vote Date: 3/25/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/18/2019
File No.: 655

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Environment Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
The Clean Water Fund (CWF) was created in 1986 to financially assist municipalities with project development that would allow compliance with federal and state mandated water quality standards. Proponents of the bill expressed concern that cost for necessary upgrades to existing treatment facilities and development of new facilities is estimated to be $5.2 billion. The bill seeks to continue assisting municipalities with the costs of compliance by authorizing $180 million in new general obligation bonding for CWF projects.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
None Submitted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
Donna Hamzy Carroccia, Advocacy Manager, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities: Municipalities depend on grants and general obligation bonds to move forward on projects to clean up state rivers and Long Island Sound. The Clean Water Fund was created in 1986 to provide low-cost financing to municipalities for assistance with compliance to federal and state water quality standards, and to improve the conditions of the state’s waterways. The bill is necessary because towns and cities lack the fiscal capacity to pay for expensive sewerage facilities.
Bill Lucey, Long Island Sound keeper, Connecticut Fund for the Environment: Testimony provides history and current status of the Clean Water Fund (CWF). The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection estimates the combined fiscal needs for currently identified wastewater infrastructure is $5.2 billion to meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s water quality standards. This is approximately $260 million annually over the next 20 years; 65% of these costs are expected to be met through the CWF.

David Sutherland, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy: Provided testimony of the threats facing Long Island Sound. Nitrogen form wastewater, fertilizers, and the atmosphere are principal threats to the life supporting systems of Long Island Sound. It is important that the bill provides additional $20 million annually for grants on a competitive basis for demonstration projects to reduce nonpoint source pollution of Long Island Sound. The Nature Conservancy requests authorization for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Office of Policy Management be authorized to designate another entity to administer the grant program.

The Environment Committee received approximately 10 written testimonies in support of the bill explaining (1) the history, purpose and necessity of the Clean Water Fund to assist with compliance on federal and state water quality mandates, and (2) the necessity of financial assistance towards Long Island Sound.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Submitted.

Reported by: Pamela Bianca / Ussawin R. Bumpen Date: 4/18/2019