Bill No.: SB-927
Title: AN ACT CREATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND WITHIN THE CONNECTICUT GREEN BANK.
Vote Date: 3/12/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 2/26/2019

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Banking Committee

CO-SPONSOR OF BILL:

REASONS FOR BILL:
The purpose of this bill is to broaden the scope of The CT Green Bank from its current mission of attracting private investment to scale up clean energy development, to including environmental infrastructure development. It will utilize limited State funding with innovative financing to leverage greater sums of private capital to provide funding for low-interest loans for public and private infrastructure.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Shawn T. Wooden, Treasurer of the State of Connecticut:

Treasurer Wooden is in support of SB 927. The Treasurer states that after the successful operation of the State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program for both the Clean Water Fund and the Drinking Water Fund which provides low interest loans and grant money for both municipalities and private water systems to construct, rehabilitate or upgrade their waste water treatment operations or public drinking systems. The SRF has been a successful, and collaborative effort between The Treasury, The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Connecticut Department of Public Health for 40 years. The Treasurer cautions that any additional funding for waste water, or water infrastructure is not to be taken from the programs that have been already established and proven successful.
Raul Pino, MD, M.P.H. Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH):

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is in support of the general concept of SB 927. The DPH explains they are the agency that is enforced to implement and enforce the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations and conduct oversight of public water systems. The DPH also administers the DWSRF fund in collaboration with the OTT, and the EPA. The DPH has concerns about the redirection of funding mechanisms for existing programs. The DPH suggests that legislation for additional funding for drinking water infrastructure take into consideration and complement the existing mechanisms for funding these projects.

Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP):

DEEP is in support of SB 927, but they have concerns about the potential of redirection of funding for programs that have already proven successful. DEEP has concerns about Clean Water State Revolving Fund being a successful program that would have funds diverted from it under this current proposal. DEEP feels that an Environmental Infrastructure Fund should take into consideration the programs that have been successful and not jeopardize that funding.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

David Sutherland, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy:

The Nature Conservancy is in support of SB 927. The testimony supplied by The Nature Conservancy, cites the growing danger from Sea Level Rise. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, “Between 1950-1979 and 1982-2009 SLR rate increases in the Northeast were 3-4 times higher than the global average.” Sea levels are not only rising in Long Island Sound but the rate of rise is increasing. Currently NOAA maintains a tidal gauge in New London that shows a significant increase of the rate of SLR. Compared to the average annual rate of rise from 1938 to 1988, the rate of rise between 1989 and 2012 has tripled. There is real concern that some of our coastal communities will literally not survive the next few decades.

The Nature Conservancy has supplied 2 links in their testimony with further information on Regional Resilience Projects that are currently under way in Connecticut.

The Connecticut Green Bank:

The Connecticut Green Bank is in support of SB 927. The CT Green Bank cites the importance of expanding its role to include “environmental infrastructure.” With the Green
Banks ability of Bonding, they will be able to attract more private investment to modernize Connecticut’s environmental infrastructure.

**Donna Hamzy-Carroccia, Advocacy Manager of The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM):**

CCM writes in support of SB 927. CCM is hopeful that this fund will help over 100 communities in Connecticut that have been mandated to create, maintain and report on local storm water programs to mitigate the amount of contamination that finds its way into the storm drains. These regulations have cost towns and cities since their implementation. Enactment of this would provide assistance to affected municipalities while having the least impact on local property taxes.

**Elizabeth Gara, Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA):**

CWWA is in support of SB 927. It is the belief of CWWA that a reliable infrastructure that delivers a sage supply of water to residents and businesses is critical to the public health and safety of all communities. The State’s Water Companies face a major challenge in replacing aging water infrastructure at a time that state and municipal funds are limited and utility companies are under pressure to minimize or postpone rate hikes in a struggling economy.

**Betsy Gara, Connecticut Council of Small Towns, (COST):**

COST testifies in support of SB 927. COST would like to point to MS4 Storm Water General Permit, this updated regulation imposes a hardship for some communities. This regulation requires numerous requirements for storm water management, including new testing, monitoring, and reporting requirements, with public outreach, and catch basin cleaning to minimize pollution runoff. This causes additional staffing and operational costs as well as new equipment and system purchases.

**Ann Gadwah, Chapter Chair, Sierra Club Connecticut:**

The Sierra Club of Connecticut is in support of SB 927. The Sierra Club of Connecticut believes that by broadening the scope of the Connecticut Green Bank beyond clean energy to include environmental infrastructure, it would facilitate more private investment in the Green Bank and environmental infrastructure projects. The Sierra Club believes that with the current budget situation, more private investment in the Green Banks makes good financial sense and gives the Green Bank more flexibility for funding projects.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None Provided