



**For the Environment Committee
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Executive Director
February 21, 2020**

Rivers Alliance was formed to fight for sound water policies at the state and federal levels, to provide education on water resources, and to advocate for any person or group striving to protect water. If you want clean, free-flowing and healthy rivers, and high-quality drinking water, Rivers Alliance is here to help.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the following raised bills before you today.

HJ-1 RESOLUTION PROPOSING THE ADOPTION OF THE LONG ISLAND BLUE PLAN – SUPPORT

Long Island Sound is one of Connecticut’s most important ecological treasures and its health and vitality is inextricably linked to the health and vitality of our state’s economy and quality of life. The development of the Long Island Sound Blue Plan was a rigorous stakeholder and public process that produced a resource and use inventory that will be essential in making management decisions. Thank you for bringing forth this resolution to a public hearing early in the session. We urge you to pass this resolution.

SB-97 AAC TRAINING STANDARDS FOR ROAD SALT APPLICATORS - SUPPORT

In 2015, the US Geological Survey released a report titled [*Nutrient, Organic Carbon, and Chloride Concentrations and Loads in Selected Long Island Sound Tributaries: Four Decades of Change Following the Passage of the Federal Clean Water Act*](#). The report concluded that there has been an increase in chloride concentrations and makes the alarming predication that,

“If current trends continue, it can be expected that recommended aquatic criteria will be exceeded in the future at some of the sites studied. The largest source of these increases in chloride concentrations and loads is likely to be the use of salt for deicing.”

We must get a better handle on how road salts are utilized and implement best practices state-wide **BEFORE** this criteria is exceeded. This proposed legislation is a good start but will only be effective when training is required.

High chloride concentrations are a real threat to private wells and public drinking water supplies. However, it is also extremely important to understand that they are of an equally significant threat to

aquatic organisms. For example, planktonic crustaceans are highly sensitive to elevated levels of chloride. While the average person would not miss these no-see-ums of the water world, they are an important food source for fish and help control algae. They'll be missed as algal blooms and eutrophication increase in our lakes and ponds. We strongly suggest that the statement of purpose be broadened to include all surface waters and ground water.

SB-99 AAC THE USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF POLYSTYRENE - SUPPORT

Talk to anyone who has participated in a river cleanup and they will tell you that single-use polystyrene is a serious threat to our waters and aquatic environment. It easily breaks down into very small pieces that are nearly impossible to remove from riverbanks and shorelines and makes its way into the ocean to contribute to the ever-increasing masses of plastic pollution. Each year, volunteers for the Connecticut River Conservancy's Source to Sea Cleanup report picking up more than 1,000 polystyrene cups and approximately 1.4 cubic yards of polystyrene pieces and particles.

School-aged children, teenagers and college students are more aware than older adults of the need to discontinue use of disposable plastic and polystyrene items as well as reduce, in general, the waste items that we create. Yet polystyrene trays and food service items are being used in our schools where kids have a no choice but to use these items and throw them away.

Lastly, Connecticut is experiencing a solid waste management crisis. Municipalities are struggling to pay for the cost of their municipal solid waste programs. Mandating a discontinuation of trays made from expanded polystyrene in a setting where hundreds of trays will be used each day will aid in reducing the bulk of solid waste. This bill could go even farther in reducing municipal solid waste by including all food service items made from polystyrene.

Please pass this bill. The youth of Connecticut will thank you.

HB-5103 AA REQUIRING AN EVALUATION OF THE STATE'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LAW – SUPPORT

Public participation in decisions that will have an impact on the environment, our communities, and the health of those that reside in EVERY community in Connecticut is an issue of utmost importance to Rivers Alliance. We refer to the excellent points raised by Alex Rodriguez in testimony submitted on behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters on the necessity of this bill. To ensure that Connecticut is truly in the position to provide "all persons with an adequate remedy to protect the air, water and other natural resources from unreasonable pollution, impairment or destruction" we urge you pass this bill.