



**Testimony
Betsy Gara
Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Environment Committee
February 10, 2021**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) **supports HB-6384, An Act Concerning Aquatic Invasive Species' Effects on Lakes and Related Funding.**

The Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp program created a user-fee based approach to fund efforts to prevent and respond to infestations of aquatic invasive species that negatively impact water quality, recreational use, environmental health and property values.

Requiring the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to prepare an annual report to determine the amount of revenues generated under the program and the extent to which they have been successful and sufficient in assisting municipalities and lake authorities address concerns regarding aquatic invasive species will be very helpful. The bill also calls for DEEP to identify other potential funding mechanisms, which is critical to sustaining efforts to combat invasive species in our communities.

COST urges support for the bill, which will help ensure that Connecticut maintains a viable aquatic invasive species program to effectively address threats posed by invasive species, such as hydrilla, water chestnut, fanwort, milfoil, zebra mussels, toxic algae, and others.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the bill.