



**For the Environment Committee  
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Executive Director  
March 8, 2021**

*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 bill before you today.

**HB 6441 AAC CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION – SUPPORT**

Rivers Alliance of Connecticut supports this bill in its entirety. I had the pleasure to serve as a Co-Chair of the Working and Natural Lands Working Group of the Governor’s Council on Climate Change. The bill before you is a direct result of the hard work put in by a multitude of natural resource, business, policy and funding experts. This bill will provide communities with a toolbox of options to fund, either directly or indirectly, a multitude of recommendations made in the Working and Natural Lands reports.

***SECTIONS 1&2 – Enables communities to establish a stormwater authority***

This bill will give communities the option to establish a stormwater authority that would generate revenue for infrastructure and other activities necessary to reduce pollution to our rivers and streams (and ultimately Long Island Sound) from stormwater. Stormwater authorities can provide new efficiencies and economies of scale with integrated stormwater management that will benefit all stakeholders.

**The passage of stormwater utility enabling legislation was a near-term recommendation included in the Rivers Sub-Working Group Report which was a Sub-working Group of the Working and Natural Lands Group of the Governor’s Council on Climate Change.** Based on Connecticut Physical Climate Science Assessment Report (2019), the annual total precipitation in our state is projected to increase by 4-5 inches (approximately 8.5%) by the midcentury (2040-2069) and by 4.5-5.5 inches (approximately 10%) by the late century (2070-2099). In order to address water quality and flooding issues due to stormwater from this increase that will likely come in the form of more frequent, short-duration storms, we must focus on establishing and securing adequate and

sustained funding for stormwater infrastructure and nature-based stormwater management.

Having the option to establish a stormwater authority will not only help pay for programs to comply with requirements under the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4 General Permit), it will provide resources to help communities implement stormwater management programs and nature-based solutions to help their communities be more resilient to climate change.

**Section 3 - Enables a Municipal Funding Option to establish a limited buyer's conveyance fee program**

The enabling legislation in this bill will allow municipalities to raise revenue, **if they so choose to do so**, by establishing a limited buyer's conveyance fee program. The revenue from this program would be used to fund climate resilience programs and local environmental projects.

**Sections 4 through 18 – Broadens the focus of flood and erosion control boards**

These sections broaden the focus of flood and erosion control boards to flood prevention and climate resilience. Key to these sections is new language allowing for local boards to form joint boards. Our waters cannot be managed by political boundaries. Any improvements in flood prevention and resiliency to climate change must be accomplished with a focus on watersheds.

**Sections 19 through 23 – Creates an Environmental Infrastructure Fund**

Carbon reduction is a key aspect of our fight against climate change. However, we can't let trade-offs diminish our water and natural land's natural ability to provide essential services such as clean and plentiful water. These sections provide an infrastructure fund to preserve these services. Rivers Alliance supports an investment in nature-based solutions such as preserving flood plains and improving connectivity (just to name a few.)

Thank you again for raising this bill. It is a relief to those of us who volunteered many hours of time to develop recommendations for the GC3 to see that action is being taken.