

MUNICIPAL FUNDING OPTION

Submitted 03-07-2021

To: Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Gresko, Vice Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Miner and Rep. Harding, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Sharon Mann: Chair: Bloomfield Beautification Committee (BBC) and co-sponsor TREES FOR BLOOMFIELD Initiative. On behalf of BBC, thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 6441 that will fund climate adaptation and resilience projects. This legislation is a unique opportunity to provide new tools to our towns and cities to fight climate change.

Section 3 of the bill will give municipalities an option to establish a buyer's conveyance fee to fund land stewardship, climate resilience, and other environmental projects in our communities. We are one of the Towns that can use these funds to support our initiative to educate our Bloomfield community on the importance of combatting invasive species in our forests, providing stewardship of our urban parks, and creating woodland trails in parks that have been neglected due to lack of monies.

We have identified that there is a critical need to provide education and experiential opportunities for the public to better understand the role that trees play in improving the overall quality of life for our residents throughout the town and mitigating climate change. We've lost and are losing too many of our trees in Bloomfield and in other towns throughout the state due to old age, storm damage, disease, and lack of funds for maintenance. Did you know that it takes up to 50 years to replace the environmental value of a single mature tree taken down? We're not replacing lost trees, and our children and grandchildren will suffer the consequences. **The time to act is now.**

Adoption of the program by towns is optional, and at no expense to Connecticut.

Municipalities can choose what is best for them and their residents.

This would not impact the municipal mill rate or require further local bonding.

Many towns have voiced their desire to have a local conveyance fee option to help their conservation efforts. This is not just a one-time infusion of money to purchase land—this is a long-term sustainable funding stream that will help our land, water and climate for generations.

Please support HB 6441 and give municipalities the freedom to choose the financial tools that are best suited to their local environmental needs. Passage of this bill will ultimately benefit our entire state. Thank you.

Sharon J. Mann, Chair - Bloomfield Beautification Committee



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