



# COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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*Executive Director*

## Testimony of the Council on Environmental Quality Regarding Governor’s Bill 6441

March 5, 2021

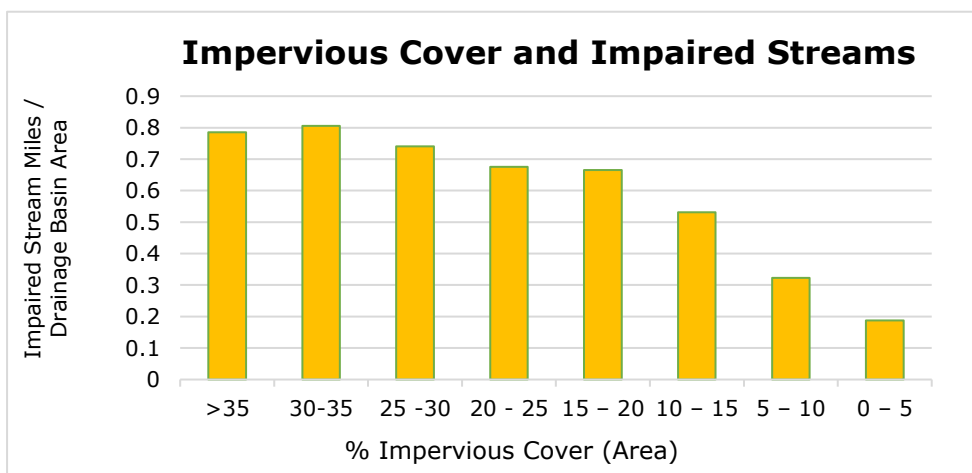
Co-chairs Cohen and Borer, Vice-Chairs Slap and Gresko, Ranking Members Miner and Harding, and other distinguished members of the Environment Committee.

The Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality (Council) supports Governor’s Bill 6441 - An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation. Provisions in the Bill will reduce the negative effects of stormwater runoff, add to the State’s open space and fund environmental infrastructure projects.

### Improving Stormwater Management

The Council supports the provisions of the proposed Bill to expand the use of municipal stormwater boards or commissions to minimize stormwater runoff and pollution and enhance awareness of stormwater management. The Council’s Annual Report, [Environmental Quality in Connecticut](#), documents an association between impervious cover and a decline in water quality, which control of stormwater runoff could lessen.

Data from 2018, analyzed for the Council’s 2020 Annual Report, shows a decline in water quality is apparent when the percentage of impervious surfaces in a watershed exceeds 15 percent. The assessment looked at the relationship between the percent of impervious cover and the number of stream/river miles that do not support aquatic life or recreation for each impervious cover grouping shown below.



### **Increasing Open Space**

The State set a goal for the acquisition of open space by both the State and its partners at 21 percent of all the area in the State. The Council's analysis of the amount of open space thus far preserved (76%) indicates that the established goal will not be met by 2024 at the current pace of preservation.

The Council supports the provision of the proposed Bill that would allow municipalities to establish a "buyer's conveyance fee" on the conveyance of real property for the purposes of preservation and stewardship of open space. Open space preservation enhances recreational opportunities, protects wildlife habitat, and mitigates climate warming. Another benefit, as noted previously, is that unpaved areas can prevent water pollution by decreasing runoff to streams and other water bodies.

### **Environmental Infrastructure Fund**

The Council supports the establishment of an Environmental Infrastructure Fund, managed by the Connecticut Green Bank. Climate change is negatively affecting most of the environmental indicators that the Council analyzes in its Annual Report. The Bill's proposed "buyer's conveyance fee" is a useful approach for the funding of strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change and for other environmental programs in municipalities that choose to utilize it.

The Council will make itself available to the Committee, upon request, to answer any questions or provide additional information.

Respectfully submitted,



Peter Hearn  
Executive Director