



MITCHELL

C O L L E G E

**Testimony for the
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Tracy Espy, President
Mitchell College
March 21, 2022**

On behalf of Mitchell College, I am submitting testimony in favor of **H.B. 5476: AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF PARTIAL FEE REDUCTIONS BY MUNICIPAL STORMWATER AUTHORITIES AND THE INCLUSION OF HEATING, VENTILATING AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS IN SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT GRANT PAYMENTS**, which seeks, in part, to ensure Stormwater Authorities have a thorough process in place for awarding credit in the form of a fee reduction for investments that property owners have made to reduce or eliminate storm water runoff. The bill also eliminates “grand list assessment” as one of the factors a municipality should consider when determining the Stormwater assessment on a property.

We appreciate that the Committee has raised this bill as we have significant concerns about the impact that Stormwater Authorities might have on non-profit higher education institutions across the state, especially as many of these institutions, like Mitchell, are seeing declining enrollments and fiscal challenges due to the pandemic. In New London, the only city with a Stormwater Authority currently in place, Mitchell College has been paying \$17,000 annually for the past 4 years.

The bill before you seeks to ensure that Stormwater Authorities provide property owners appropriate opportunity to receive credit in the form of a fee reduction for mitigation investments. It is sound public policy to incentivize private investment in this area as municipalities cannot afford to fix the problem alone. However, municipalities must be required to have a thorough process in place to adequately incentive and reward this work.

Mitchell College has an installed Stormwater detention system in one of the parking lots that reduces the potential storm water that would have entered the City’s system, and the recently renovated athletics fields have an inline weir system to reduce the underdrain storm water runoff and promote infiltration under the fields.

We believe that assessment of efforts to mitigate stormwater entering the public system should be available and should result in a reduction in fees to the Stormwater Authority. Such a process would benefit non-profits across the state.

The bill also eliminates grand list assessment as a factor that municipalities shall consider in determining the fees that the Stormwater Authority assess. The value of a property has no bearing on that property’s run-off. Further, the fees will essentially just be a property tax in disguise if the grand list assessment is considered. In New London, the fee assessed is based strictly on the square feet of impervious surface and this is how other cities and towns should approach the fee as well.

At Mitchell College, we work to be good stewards of our property and the waterway on which our College is located. We appreciate your consideration of this bill, and ask the you help us to keep our costs reasonable, as we continue to contribute to the efforts of the City of New London to protect its streets and waterways. It would be helpful if organizations, like Mitchell College, are able to become a part of the conversation, using what we have learned and experienced since the Stormwater Authority has been in place.