



**Testimony for the
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
David Frassinelli, Vice President For Facilities
Fairfield University
March 21, 2022**

On behalf of Fairfield University, 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 local Stormwater Authorities have a thorough process in place for awarding a fee reduction for properties that invest in limiting or eliminating stormwater runoff. The bill also eliminates the reference to grand list valuation as one of the factors a municipality can consider when determining the stormwater assessment on a property.

We very much appreciate that the Committee has raised this bill which both incentivize private investment in limiting run-off on private property and will help limit the exposure that tax-exempt non-profit institutions like [Institution] might have if a city or town were to create a Stormwater Authority. In New London, the only city where a Stormwater Authority currently exists, non-profit institutions of higher education are paying very high annual fees and it lacks a thorough system for awarding credit.

Fairfield University invests significantly in its infrastructure to limit or eliminate run off, and has invested in stormwater management best practices. The University has been required to manage and mitigate storm water for all projects developed on campus. As impervious surfaces such as new buildings are created, the Town requires the installation of water retention systems that will collect the building runoff and retain it so that it can be slowly released into storm water systems. The University also collects water in Hopkins Pond from the general campus runoff. This allows for sedimentation, absorption and slow release off campus. The University has included pervious pavement on a series of projects since 2010 when it was first introduced. This “green” feature allows for the absorption of water through paved parking lots to reduce storm water runoff.

Further, while we are rebounding, the pandemic has not been easy on the finances of non-profit institutions such as the Fairfield University. Between March 2020 and today, the University has seen significant lost revenues. We have invested millions in our testing infrastructure as well as other safety protocols to ensure we could remain open and keep our students, staff and communities as safe as possible. While federal stimulus dollars have been helpful, they have covered less than half of our expenses.

Given the consensus to significantly increase PILOT funding for municipalities last session – which we very much appreciate—as well as significant federal funding going to municipalities over the next few years, while at the same time non-profit entities have lost significant revenue from the pandemic, we are very concerned about the consequences of allowing municipalities to assess fees such as these on the property of tax-exempt organizations. Thank you for the opportunity to support this legislation today.