

# UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

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200 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117

**Testimony for the  
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee  
Laura Whitney, Vice President for Finance  
University of Hartford  
March 21, 2022**

On behalf of The University of Hartford, 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 incentivizes private investment in limiting run-off on private property and will help limit the exposure that tax-exempt non-profit institutions like the University of Hartford 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.

The University of Hartford invests significantly in its infrastructure to limit or eliminate run off. Recent examples include:

- At our newly opened Hursey Center for Advanced Engineering and Health Professions, we installed a 24,000-sf green roof, two (2) storm water detention rain gardens, 37,000-sf of meadow grass around the building perimeter as well as 12,000-gallons of underground storm water detention chambers to both limit run off and significantly improve the water quality of any storm water.
- In 2020, we converted ~6,000-sf of impervious land back to pervious lawn area after the removal of several modular building units.
- When we developed our athletic fields site several years ago we dedicated two (2) separate 6-acre Conservation Easement areas on campus ensuring those 12-acres of land are never developed or increase run off to the local water shed.
- Our new catch basin structures have integral oil-debris hoods and large sumps to improve water quality prior to discharge to the local water shed.

- We are currently evaluating the potential conversion of an additional ~55,000-sf of impervious land back to pervious lawn area.

Further, while we are strategically planning for a very strong future, the pandemic has not been easy on the finances of non-profit institutions such as the University of Hartford. Between March 2020 and today, the University has seen significant lost revenues. We invested millions in our covid 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 lost revenue and expenses.

We very much appreciate the consensus to significantly increase PILOT funding for municipalities last session, as well as the significant federal funding going to municipalities over the next few years. However, 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.