



**For the Environment Committee
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Executive Director
February 15, 2023**

Rivers Alliance was formed to fight for sound water policies at the state and federal levels, to provide education on water resources, and to advocate for any person or group striving to protect water. If you want clean, free-flowing and healthy rivers, and high-quality drinking water, Rivers Alliance is here to help.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the following raised bills before you today.

HB 6610 AAC “NO NET LOSS” OF FORESTS - SUPPORT

One of the two primary objectives of the Governor’s Council on Climate Change (GC3) was to “[d]evelop and implement adaptation strategies to assess and prepare for the impacts of climate change in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, natural resources, and public health.”

Protecting and enhancing our existing natural resources is the easiest and most cost effective way to combat the impacts of climate change. Our forests and trees sequester carbon, provide relief from extreme heat events, and protect water quality. Trees along our waterways slow bank erosion and provide habitat for fish and other animals and invertebrates.

HB 6610 is a good first step in implementing the recommendation that came from the GC3 as well as several other forest plans for “no net loss” of forests. The amount of thought and collaboration by experts that has been put into all of these plans and recommendations for our forests is not trivial.

We also support the modifications that Eric Hammering of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association has suggested that would update and improve it for implementation in Connecticut.

While this is a good first step, we should continue to incorporate changes into our laws, policy, regulations, permitting and land use decision processes that encourages and incentivizes “leaving forests and forests” across the state, not just on state land.

Please pass this bill.

