



**For the Environment Committee
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Executive Director
March 3, 2025**

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 bill before you today.

HB 6868 – AN ACT ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING PREDICTABILITY – Opposes Section 4

Section 4 will limit the public's ability to participate and provide input on DEEP's environmental decision making.

The ability of the public to challenge and influence decisions that affect our environment is a foundational aspect of our decision-making process for which Rivers Alliance has always and will always fight to maintain. The matters this proposal seeks to address should be handled through the Bar and the DEEP Rules of Practice rather than being launched as a poorly thought through proposed legislation. For this reason, we strongly oppose this bill.

DEEP's existing Rules of Practice already address all the situations in this bill. This proposal will create confusion and uncertainty and unnecessarily **limit the public's ability to participate and provide input on DEEP's environmental decision-making**. We defer to the very detailed testimony of Roger Reynolds of Save the Sound who's legal expertise on complicated legal matters and DEEP's processes is unmatched.

Considering the significant progress made by state and federal environmental laws since the 1970s in improving air and water quality and protecting open space—and in light of the ongoing attacks on the federal system of environmental regulation—now is an especially critical time to not undermine the processes that support environmental protection.

We strongly urge the committee to reject this proposal.