



**For the Environment Committee  
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Executive Director  
March 17, 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 7172 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE SEWAGE RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT –  
Support**

We strongly support this bill which seeks to enhance Connecticut’s Sewage Right to Know (SRTK) program to ensure greater accessibility and transparency for the residents who rely on this information. We commend the committee for addressing this critical issue and urge swift action to strengthen public notifications regarding sewage spills and discharges.

Over the past decade, Connecticut has made significant strides in improving sewage infrastructure and reducing sewage discharges. The Clean Water Fund (CWF) has played a vital role in upgrading wastewater treatment systems, prioritizing the elimination of Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs). As a result, the number of CSO communities has been reduced, and long-term plans are in place to address the remaining systems. However, despite these efforts, an estimated 700 million to one billion gallons of sewage-contaminated rainwater still enter our rivers and coastline annually. **This continued discharge underscores the need for a robust and accessible public notification system.**

**The current notification system in Connecticut is inadequate for reaching and informing the public effectively.** The state relies on a social media account with limited reach and a CTDEEP Performance Dashboard that, while accurate, is not user-friendly. Many residents, journalists, and stakeholders are unaware that this resource exists, and even those who do find it often struggle to interpret the data. In contrast, Massachusetts has implemented a more accessible notification system that allows individuals to sign up for real-time email alerts, ensuring the public is aware of contamination events as they occur. The lack of a comparable system in Connecticut has led to confusion, with some mistakenly believing that sewage discharges are only a problem upstream in Massachusetts when, in fact, Connecticut faces the same challenges.

**Public health and environmental protection demand a more transparent and effective notification system.** When sewage overflows occur, people need clear, real-time information so they can take precautions and avoid exposure to harmful pathogens. Implementing a stronger, more user-friendly SRTK program will not only improve public awareness but also reinforce accountability for addressing ongoing pollution concerns.

Rivers Alliance of Connecticut and our clean water partners strongly support enhancing the SRTK program to ensure that all residents can easily access critical information about water quality in their communities. We urge the legislature to support 7172 and take meaningful steps toward a cleaner, healthier future for Connecticut's waterways.