



**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.

SB 75 – AN ACT REQUIRING THE EXPEDITING OF PERMITS FOR THE REMEDIATION OF HYDRILLA IN LAKES ACROSS THE STATE– Opposes

I support the intent of this bill, as a rapid response to hydrilla—particularly the Connecticut River strain—is essential to preserve the health, recreational value, and economic benefits of our rivers, lakes, and ponds. However, I believe this issue should be addressed more systematically, with best practices in place.

In my previous position at the Connecticut River Conservancy, I witnessed firsthand the alarming spread of the Connecticut River strain of hydrilla when it was first discovered. I spent several days each week on the river and watched with sadness and concern as some of my favorite places, such as the floating meadows of the Mattabeset River, were overtaken within one or two seasons. Although I am no longer on the river for work, I continue to row crew in Middletown on the Connecticut River. By August, the hydrilla becomes so dense at the dock that we can only launch one boat at a time instead of three. I understand from personal experience the significant impact hydrilla can have on the use of our waters.

I strongly support the establishment of an Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response General Permit, as proposed by the Connecticut Federation of Lakes and modeled after Vermont’s successful program. This approach strikes a balance between the urgent need for rapid response to prevent infestations from spiraling out of control and the importance of a science-based strategy that protects the long-term health of our rivers and lakes.

I look forward to collaborating with the committee and the bill’s proponents to **ensure we can respond swiftly and effectively to hydrilla outbreaks without compromising the ecological health of our waters.**