



**For the Environment Committee
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Executive Director
March 13, 2026**

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 5522 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SEWAGE RIGHT TO KNOW ACT – SUPPORTS

Rivers Alliance has been a long-time proponent of a modern and effective sewage spill notification system in Connecticut. For many years, we have participated in stakeholder discussions with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), utilities, and conservation organizations about how to improve the state's Sewage Right-to-Know law so that the public is alerted quickly when sewage reaches our waterways.

Sewage spills are not rare events. When they occur they can pose an immediate public health risk. Rivers and streams are places where people swim, paddle, fish, and allow their children and pets to play. When a spill occurs and the public is not aware of it, people may unknowingly come into contact with contaminated water. In past incidents, river users have continued to recreate in waters affected by sewage spills simply because they had no way of knowing that contamination had occurred.

Connecticut has made important progress in improving its notification law over the past decade. H.B. 5522 represents the next logical step in that process by modernizing the system used to notify the public. Save the Sound has worked closely with DEEP on this issue and has helped advance the proposal before you today. Rivers Alliance appreciates their leadership and is pleased to support this effort.

The key improvement proposed in this bill is the creation of an **automated electronic notification system** that can quickly alert the public when and where sewage is entering

Connecticut's waters. A system that provides timely, accessible information allows residents to make informed decisions about their safety and recreation. It also promotes transparency and public confidence in how these incidents are managed.

We also support ensuring that DEEP has the **resources necessary to launch and maintain** this notification system. A public alert system is only effective if it is reliable, maintained, and kept up to date.

Connecticut residents have a right to know when sewage contamination may affect the waters where they swim, paddle, or fish. Modernizing the Sewage Right-to-Know system is a practical and important step toward protecting public health and improving transparency about water quality.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration of this bill.