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March 7, 2021

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Connecticut General Assembly, Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106



Litchfield Hills Greenprint
Collaborative

Environment Committee Testimony - HB 6441 – 3/8 Governor's Bill 6441: An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation

Dear Senator Cohen, Representative Borer, and members of the Environment Committee;

The Housatonic Valley Association, Inc. (HVA)/Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative appreciates the opportunity to offer public comment to the Environment Committee and express our unqualified support for HB 6441, which follows the recommendations of the Governor's Council on Climate Change by providing important funding tools to municipalities to better respond to the impacts of a changing climate.

We especially support Section 3 of the bill, which provides Connecticut's communities the opportunity to establish a limited buyer's conveyance fee to generate revenue for land stewardship, climate adaptation, resilience, and other local environmental projects including invasive species control and tree planting.

As an accredited land trust and regional watershed organization, HVA protects the natural character and environmental health of the entire Housatonic watershed, including 55 cities and towns in Connecticut. The Greenprint Collaborative - a project of HVA - is a partnership of 33 organizations working together to ensure coordinated and complementary conservation across the Northwest Connecticut Region. Greenprint's partners directly serve the communities of Barkhamstead, Bethlehem, Burlington, Canaan, Colebrook, Cornwall, Falls Village, Goshen, Hartland, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Middlebury, Morris, New Hartford, New Milford, Norfolk, North Canaan, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Sherman, Torrington, Warren, Washington, Watertown, Winchester, and Woodbury.

We support HB 6441 because it offers participating municipalities a means of generating dedicated, sustainable, local funding to apply to the most pressing climate-driven needs of their residents. It also increases opportunities to leverage matching support from federal, state and private sources, a critical strategy for impactful projects that would otherwise not be economically feasible. Our neighboring states of Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island have successfully used such a tool.

Connecticut residents working in the Greenprint Collaborative are knowledgeable about climate-driven needs in their towns, and could help their municipal leaders use funding generated by the conveyance fee program to address threatened water quality, support local plant and animal communities including those important to Connecticut's food and other economies, manage stormwater issues impacting town infrastructure, improve public access to nature and outdoor recreation, and provide for zero-carbon transportation alternatives such as bike and walking trails connecting community centers. These projects would provide direct and significant impacts to public health and community sustainability.

We support the flexibility provided by the bill, which allows adopting municipalities to choose the fee level types of real property conveyances appropriate to their towns. Adoption of the program by towns is optional, and it costs the state nothing. Please support HB 6441 so that Connecticut cities and towns have the opportunity of using this option to meet community needs driven by the changing climate.

Sincerely,

Tim Abbott
Regional Land Protection Director

Connie Manes
Greenprint Director

