



Testimony Regarding

House Bill 6441

An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation

Made before the

Joint Committee on the Environment

March 8, 2021

Honorable members of the Joint Committee on the Environment, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 6441. By 2050, Connecticut can expect to see rising seas, higher temperatures, more severe droughts, and increased flooding instances.

These climate related impacts will disproportionately affect low/moderate income neighborhoods who lack the public and private investment necessary to improve their resiliency to climate change. As a member of the Governor's Council on Climate Change and Co-Chair of the Adaptation Planning and Implementation Working Group, I fully understand the need to integrate equity and environmental justice into all aspect of the planning and implementation process. The mechanisms in this bill to raise local and state funding for resilient and adaptive infrastructure projects is necessary to ensure all Connecticut residents can adapt to our changing climate.

Additionally, sea level rise and saltwater encroachment pose a direct threat to current infrastructure, which is not built to endure saltwater exposure and will lead to increased maintenance and replacement costs.

The establishment of a municipal stormwater authority will provide funding to better mitigate the increased rain and storm events projected over the next 20-50 years, as well as assist in reducing stormwater runoff that impairs many of the state's rivers and streams. Where possible, green infrastructure should be incorporated into all future planning, renovations, and re-development. Low impact design such as bioswales, tree planting, open space protection, and living shorelines must be integrated to provide long term regional resiliency against climate change.



The buyer's conveyance fee proposed in House Bill 6441 will provide critical funding for municipalities to protect natural lands and implement resilient infrastructure improvement without negatively effecting the need for affordable housing throughout the state.

This proposed legislation allows the Green Bank to seek federal funding, utilize its bonding authority, and invest in actional opportunities associated in climate resiliency. Providing these important funding opportunities to the Green Bank will stimulate more active private investment into the State.

Finally, modifying flood and erosion control boards to include climate resilience will allow municipalities to explore flood prevention, erosion control, and climate change mitigation strategies. The bill also directs those boards to consider vulnerable communities and emergency management, which can provide direct aid to communities through the Climate Change and Coastal Resiliency Reserve Funds.

There are numerous examples of more intense and destructive storms in Connecticut over the last 10 years and those storms are expected to increase in severity and frequency. Without proving additional funding mechanisms to address climate related impacts the state will not be adequately prepared for the changing climate. Connecticut has the opportunity, under this legislation, to be a leader in climate resiliency.

Sincerely,

Matthew Fulda
Executive Director