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Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Position
Governor's Bill 6441: AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION.	Strongly Support

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is the first conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. For over 125 years, CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly on various State Park and Forest, trail recreation, sustainable forestry, and land conservation issues.

On behalf of CFPA, I am here today to testify in strong support of Governor's Bill 6441: An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation. Although we are supportive of the entire bill, my testimony is focused on Section 3.

In 2020, I was honored to serve as the Chair of the Forests Sub-Group of the Governor's Council on Climate Change, and with a tremendous team of experts and significant public input, we developed many recommendations related to forests to respond to the current and growing existential threat that climate change poses to all of us.

Three of the key findings in the Forests Sub-Group Report that were echoed in the GC3 report "[Taking Action on Climate Change and Building a More Resilient Connecticut for All](#)" are that:

1. To respond to the magnitude of the threat from climate change will require significant investments;
2. The impacts of climate change have been and are likely to be most dramatic on individuals and communities of color that have been experiencing health and socioeconomic inequities for years; and
3. The urgency of the threat from climate change cannot be ignored, and we must take action now.

If investments are to be made at the federal, state, and local levels to address the threats of climate change, Section 3 of bill 6441 is particularly important to enable a local funding mechanism for communities that wish to utilize it.

The limited buyer's conveyance fee program proposed in Section 3 would generate revenue for land stewardship, climate adaptation and resiliency, and other local environmental priorities including tree planting and care, and invasive species control. Local funds can also be used to match other state or federal funding sources as well as repay municipal bonds that may have already been dedicated for the purposes articulated in the bill.

This is not a heavy-handed mandate, but an option for communities that wish to use it. This does not require any state staff resources or funding to implement or administer. This type of program has been launched successfully in every state bordering Connecticut (MA, NY, and RI) as well as others outside our region. There are significant economic and health benefits that would be sustained by investments in these environmental priorities.

This bill should be a no-brainer and I hope you will strongly support it. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I'd be glad to respond to any questions you may have.