

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

I am writing in support of HB 6441 which will allow municipalities to establish a conveyance fee for environmental projects. As a member of Middletown's Commissions on Urban Forestry and Conservation and Agriculture, I know that having additional funds for land stewardship, climate resilience, tree planting, and other forward-looking projects would make a big difference. In our recently-completed Plan of Conservation and Development we incorporated many aspects of climate mitigation and resilience into our planning, but are very aware that for a small city with many pressing problems, finding the funds to realize these goals will be a real challenge.

Our city has approved bonds to buy over 1,000 acres of open space over the past several decades. We have used state matching funds to preserve farmland and forests. We have formed partnerships with non-profit organizations to buy land and plant trees. However, we often fall short of basic stewardship of what we do, from clearing invasive plants and storm damage to pruning street trees and replacing mature trees at the rate of loss from invasive insects. Please support HB 6441 to give our community an additional tool to address the many environmental goals that we have set for ourselves.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Elisabeth Holder

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