



**For the Planning and Development Committee
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Executive Director
February 2, 2021**

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 this raised bill.

SB 701 AAC THE BOLTON LAKES REGIONAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY, Strongly Oppose

This bill proposes to disregard every statute, regulation, ordinance, agreement, and plan that the state of Connecticut has in place that requires inquiry into potential environmental impacts, planning implications, and economic considerations of a sewer expansion proposal.

Following a [September 2019 letter from the Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality](#) raising substantive concerns about the project, DEEP issued a letter to the Office of Policy and Management that, “the Department will not proceed any further with the processing of the above-mentioned [sic] funding agreement modification or sanitary service area modification.” Their reasons being:

“State-funded projects which are intended to provide for or allow for increased economic development, are not projects that typically fall within the mission of the Department, yet often we are charged with administering funding or acting as the sponsoring agency for those projects solely because sanitary sewers are included in the proposed project. This puts us in the difficult and conflicting role of being the sponsoring agency of a project that is not in line with our mission, but for which we are required to produce the documentation required under CEPA, when in fact we should be providing comments on a proposed action, as the regulatory agency.”

DEEP then offers, “to work with OPM, CEQ, and the Department of Economic and Community Development to develop an effective process and tools to appropriately scrutinize sanitary sewer extension projects that have the primary objective of promoting economic development.”

The most recent development is the [Notice of Time Extension for Post Scoping Notice for Coventry LowPressure Sewer Extension](#) published in the January 5, 2021 edition of the Environmental Monitor.

“Action Status: To address these comments, DEEP is in the process of seeking further input from both the Town of Coventry, as the proponent of the project, and the Office of Policy and Management. These efforts are ongoing and will include requesting an advisory statement from the Office of Policy and Management on this project, pursuant to section 16a-31(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, in light of further information provided by the Town of Coventry.”

To be sure, this is a situation without a clear and immediate pathway forward. However, bypassing any and all public process and environmental review should not be the solution. This is very dangerous precedent. **Please do not pass this bill.**