



Testimony
Elizabeth Gara
Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA)
Before the Environment Committee
March 4, 2026

RE: HB-5334 - AN ACT CONCERNING RIPARIAN AREAS

The Connecticut Water Works Association, which represents municipal, private, and regional water companies throughout Connecticut, supports the intent of HB-5334 to establish riparian buffers to protect the state's water resources.

Connecticut's water companies are committed to providing customers with safe, high quality water at a reasonable cost. This includes developing and implementing comprehensive source water protection programs to protect the purity and adequacy of Connecticut's approximately 4,000 surface and groundwater drinking water supply sources.

Source water protection plans include efforts to actively protect public water supply watershed lands, which are the lands and watercourses surrounding a public drinking water source into which precipitation drains. Recognizing the importance of protecting watershed lands, water company owned watershed lands are preserved in perpetuity through permanent conservation easements to ensure that the property remains in pristine condition for water supply purposes. This also helps protect ecological habitats and other environmental resources.

However, not all public water supply watershed lands are owned by the water company and protected by conservation easements. Therefore, it is important to assist and incentivize other landowners to protect riparian buffers to help protect watersheds and water resources against floods, erosion, and stormwater runoff. Riparian buffers reduce the impacts of runoff in watersheds, serving to filter and trap sediments and nutrients from entering local streams, rivers, and water bodies. This will help protect the quality of Connecticut's water resources, including drinking water sources.

CWWA understands that there are ongoing discussions regarding the language of the bill. We would appreciate the opportunity to continue to be engaged in these discussions to provide the perspective of the state's water utilities.

CWWA also notes that Section 5 of the bill amends subdivisions (3) and (4) of Section 22a-40 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS). To ensure that water companies can continue to construct and maintain water infrastructure, CWWA wants to make sure



that the legislation retains subdivision (5) of Section 22a-40 CGS, which authorizes water companies to undertake construction and operation of dams, reservoirs and other facilities necessary to the impoundment, storage and withdrawal of water in connection with public water supplies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the establishment of riparian buffers.

The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWWA) is an association of private, municipal, and regional public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut.