



Creating Great Communities For All
**Connecticut Chapter of the
American Planning Association**

Testimony regarding

Proposed Bill No. 6441– AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

CCAPA recognizes that climate change will significantly affect Connecticut in the coming years and **strongly supports the Governor’s overall changes to CGS §22a-498** that adds additional capacity to local authorities tasked with addressing these challenges as follows and grouped where needed for clarity. Please note our comments where slight revisions to this language may be needed.

- **Section 1 removes the language** for the pilot program selection process for municipal stormwater authorities and allows all municipalities to create these entities, while **Section 2 clarifies language** for the ability of stormwater authorities to levy annual fees with a budget that is reviewed annually by the local legislative body that identifies programs, projects, revenues, and expenditures. **CCAPA fully supports this language** and recognizes that stormwater authorities are a municipal and regional best practice used in other states to better manage localized flooding problems due to old and failing stormwater infrastructure, particularly when coupled with designated project funds.
- **Section 3 adds language** that would allow municipalities to adopt a buyer’s real estate conveyance fee that can be used for land conservation, stewardship, climate mitigation, resilience and adaptation strategies, and other community environmental projects. **However, CCAPA disagrees with the subsection** that restricts municipalities from using these funds for acquisition if they are not exempt from the 8-30g statute and recommends that additional criteria be added to allow for acquisitions for properties that meet certain overriding public safety or natural resource protection criteria such as location in the FEMA flood zone or floodway. Properties within these high risk areas should not be prioritized for multi-family housing development.
- **Sections 4-18 revise the statutory language regarding Flood Erosion Control Boards.** The Proposed Bill renames these boards as “flood prevention, climate resilience, and erosion control boards” to reflect an expanded scope allowed by the proposed bill, including reviews of regional and municipal hazard mitigation plans, resilience plans, and Plans of Conservation & Development and they may consult with the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA). The Proposed Bill clarifies bi-annual reporting requirements to be posted on municipal websites and that such boards may use municipal Climate Change and Coastal Resiliency Reserve

Funds (if such a fund is created by the municipality) as well as state, federal or private dollars to build, operate, and maintain any projects they undertake. It also expands flood prevention, climate resilience and erosion control boards the ability to levy assessments, take properties (with compensation), and manage projects for this expanded scope that includes not just built flood protections, but natural systems that may allow for better flood and storm buffering. **CCAPA supports these proposed changes to the Proposed Bill positively add capacity to municipalities that need it, but cautions** that these existing and expanded boards are staffed with volunteers. These boards are most successful when paired with municipal staff that can assist with the technical nature of the work - whether engineering, planning, or conservation staff - and those staff resources will need to be in place to assist in coordinating this board to ensure planning and physical projects can be completed. However, as the bill does not mandate the creation of these boards, but simply allows it, we feel that individual municipalities can adequately assess their own ability to take on the expanded work that creation of these boards may entail.

- **Sections 19-23.** The proposed changes to these sections of the Proposed Bill would allow the Green Bank to invest in water, waste and recycling, climate adaptation and resilience, agriculture, land conservation, parks and recreation, and environmental markets (such as carbon offsets), and it would be allowed to utilize its bonding authority, as well as seek federal funding, to raise capital to invest in and stimulate more private investment in such projects in Connecticut. **CCAPA supports the expanded scope of the Green Bank in these areas.**

CCAPA believes that the additional tools created by the proposed changes to this Proposed Bill to help address Climate Change challenges are warranted. CCAPA applauds the Governor's office and their staff for the development of such a comprehensive bill that goes beyond constructed solutions such as sea walls to solve these issues, but also places emphasis on natural solutions, retreat and adaptation where needed, and creates more financing opportunities.

WHO WE ARE

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA) has over 420 members who are governmental and consulting planners, land use attorneys, citizen planners, and other professionals engaged in planning and managing land use, economic development, housing, transportation, and conservation for local, regional, and State governments, private businesses and other entities. CCAPA has long been committed to assisting the legislature and State agencies with developing and furthering responsible growth management principles.

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