



PO Box 7114
Wilton, CT 06897
norwalkriver.org

HB 5254: Support

Dear Co-Chairs Cohen and Demicco, Vice-Chairs Gresko and Kushner, Ranking Members Harding and Miner, and members of the Environment Committee:

As Vice President of the Norwalk River Watershed Association and a life-long resident of Connecticut, I'm writing to express my support for HB 5254, legislation to enable a local option for land conservation and stewardship funding. If enacted, this legislation would allow (but not require) certain towns and cities to establish a dedicated fund to acquire, preserve, and steward open space and farmland at the municipal level by including a conveyance fee of up to 1% paid by buyers of real property.

Connecticut municipalities are feeling severely constrained by State budget cuts and looking for more creative options to fund land use projects that enhance our local economy and the quality of life for our residents. If approved through the municipal legislative process, this program would provide participating communities with a sustainable source of funding for local conservation and stewardship efforts without adversely impacting the municipal mill rate or bonding rates.

Such a fund would also enable participating towns to fulfill match requirements for community foundation, State or federal grant programs, cover the costly expenses associated with acquiring land and/or easements (appraisals, surveys, environmental assessments, closing costs, etc.), and to better maintain the town's public lands, community gardens and urban greenspaces.

Connecticut's natural resources are what make this state such a wonderful place to live, work, and recreate. Providing communities with the tools to take a more active role in the conservation and stewardship of their local lands will help keep it that way for generations to come.

Please support HB 5254. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David J. E. Havens

New Canaan, Connecticut, 06840

Norwalk River Watershed Association