



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Keith Ainsworth
Acting Chair

Timothy J. Bishop

Linda Bowers

Christopher Donnelly

Cinzia Lettieri

Aimee Petras

Denise Rodosevich

William Warzecha

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

March 3, 2026

Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Lopes and Rep. Parker, Vice Chairs Sen. Hochadel and Rep. Bumgardner, Ranking Members Sen. Harding and Rep. Callahan, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

Re: Raised Bill No. 5334 - An Act Concerning Riparian Areas – **Support**

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) is a nine-member board that works to assess the condition of Connecticut's environment and report its findings to the Governor; recommend actions to improve state environmental programs; advise state agencies on environmental impacts of proposed projects; and investigate citizens' complaints of violations of environmental laws.

The Council **SUPPORTS** the concepts in Raised Bill 5334 that would provide for greater protection and preservation of areas immediately adjacent to watercourses in the state to improve the quality of such watercourses. As detailed in the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) 2024 Final Integrated Water Quality Report¹, approximately 35 percent of the river miles assessed did not meet the designated use of fully supporting aquatic life and 71 percent of the river miles assessed did not meet the designated use of fully supporting recreation. And while there has been improvement to water quality over the last decade and even longer, these data suggest that more should be done to improve water quality in Connecticut. Specifically, the Council supports the inclusion of "resilience to storms and climate change" to Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 22a-36 Section 1; the addition of "riparian area" within the definition of "regulated activity" under CGS 22a-38, Section 2 (13); and the proposed refinement of CGS 22a-41, Section 7(a) and (d) that would require consideration of the impacts of the proposed regulated activity on public drinking water, cold water habitat, and climate change resiliency.

Thank you for your consideration of the Council's comments.

Sincerely,

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

¹ DEEP, 2024 Final Integrated Water Quality Report, December 2025; https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/deep/water/water_quality_management/305b/2024/final-2024-iwqr.pdf