



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Executive Director

March 12, 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. 5525 - An Act Concerning a Rapid Response Program for Certain Aquatic Invasive Species – **Support Concept**

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 concept** identified in Raised Bill 5525 that seeks to eradicate and/or control the spread of certain aquatic invasive species. Specifically, the Council supports the provisions of the proposed Raised Bill that would require the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to install signs at all waterbodies and boat ramps in the state to educate the public about the presence of hydrilla; develop a plan to construct boat washing stations at all state boat ramps, provide for the phase-in of the construction and maintenance of such boat washing stations, and the hiring and training of aquatic invasive species stewards; and provide technical assistance to municipalities, upon request, for the planning and construction of boat washing stations at municipal boat launches. And while the Council supports the provision that would require the Office of Aquatic Invasive Species (OAIS) to map the extent and locations of certain aquatic invasive species and consult with DEEP on the sensitivity of relevant threatened and/or endangered species to treatment, containment, or eradication measures, the Council recommends that such sensitivity analysis be extended to all species that are likely to be present within the “scientifically determined radius.”

The Council has concerns regarding the provisions of the proposed Raised Bill that focus on the application of herbicides; eliminate the need to provide notice to waterfront property owners on a privately owned lake or pond for herbicide treatments; potentially limit the Department of Public Health's review to areas less than two hundred feet from a public drinking watershed; and the lack of public input/review regarding the proposed rapid response protocol and state-wide aquatic invasive species management plan. The Council suggests refinement of the proposed legislation including the addition of a requirement for DEEP and the OAIS to examine the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that each control method might have on the environment and public health when developing the state's rapid response protocol.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Aresta". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul Aresta
Executive Director