

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill No. 6809
Environment Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
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Co-Chairs Lopes and Gresko, Vice-Chairs Hochadel and Palm, Ranking Members Harding and Callahan, and members of the Environment Committee:

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its ~130 land trusts. We advocate for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and work to ensure the long-term strength and viability of Connecticut's land conservation community.

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony regarding **House Bill 6809, An Act Concerning Financial Incentives for Certain Streamside Buffers.** CLCC supports this bill as a good step forward in recognizing the value of streamside buffers in conservation.

Streamside or riparian buffers are naturalized, vegetated areas that run alongside streams and other waterbodies and aquatic systems, like wetlands. They serve a critical function in maintaining healthy riparian ecosystems including filtering and decreasing pollution, controlling erosion and sedimentation, and providing wildlife habitat. Like other land important for its conservation values, streamside buffers may be protected through a conservation easement.

CLCC supports HB 6809 which allows DEEP to utilize stormwater infrastructure funds to acquire conservation easements from willing landowners who wish to protect streamside buffers on their property. We contend that the bill may be further strengthened by expressly allowing participation by other qualified easement holders as determined by the Commissioner (e.g. local land trusts) and the use of funds to cover typical conservation easement related expenses beyond acquisition incurred by the holder (e.g. for enforcement and stewardship.)

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill, and for all you do.

