



## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

### *The Sewage Right-to-Know Act and Expand Continuing Education for Wastewater System Operators*

#### **HB 5130- AAC the Sewage Right-to-Know Act and Expanding Continuing Education for Wastewater System Operators**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Many communities across Connecticut are served by outdated and inefficient wastewater infrastructure. When sewage infrastructure fails or is not properly maintained, millions of gallons of raw or partially treated sewage can enter our waterways. This can carry potentially devastating impacts on the environment and human health. Raw sewage overflows contaminate local water resources, causing beach closures, shellfish bed closures and fish die-offs. *According to the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), over 1 billion gallons of raw or partially treated sewage are discharged into our local waterways and the Long Island Sound each year.*

In 2012, Connecticut passed Public Act 12-11, which established an electronic sewage overflow reporting system to inform the authorities and the public about sewage spills in a timely manner. *Unfortunately, the final version of that legislation did not explicitly require sewage treatment plant operators to use the electronic reporting system.* As a result, millions of gallons of raw or partially treated sewage continue to escape into waters of the state each year, without being reported to the public.

#### **JUSTIFICATION**

In order to fully protect public health from sewer overflows, it is essential that *all* sewer plant operators in the state be required to report sewer spills in a timely fashion, using the electronic sewer overflow reporting system. Additionally, in order to provide timely notice to the community and downstream neighbors, wastewater treatment plant operators should be required to provide notice of the spill to their municipal Chief Elected Officials, as soon as is practicable. **CCE strongly supports amending PA 12-11 to require that wastewater treatment operators provide notice to the town CEO whenever a sewage spill reaches state waterways.**

## **CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS HB 5130, AAC THE SEWAGE RIGHT TO KNOW ACT AND EXPANDING CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR WASTEWATER SYSTEM OPERATORS**

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Citizens Campaign for the Environment is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment.