



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 3, 2021**

HB 6497, An Act Concerning Stormwater Authorities

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6497, An Act Concerning Stormwater Authorities**. CHA opposes the bill.

Before commenting on this bill, it is important to acknowledge that, since early 2020, Connecticut's hospitals and health systems have been at the center of the global public health emergency, acting as the critical partner in the state's response to COVID-19. Hospitals expanded critical care capacity, stood up countless community COVID-19 testing locations, and are a critical component of the vaccine distribution plan. Through it all, hospitals and health systems have continued to provide high-quality care for everyone, regardless of ability to pay. This tireless commitment to the COVID-19 response confirms the value of strong hospitals in Connecticut's public health infrastructure and economy and reinforces the need for a strong partnership between the state and hospitals.

HB 6497 proposes to authorize a municipal stormwater authority to levy a fee on property owners in the municipality subject to approval of the municipal legislative body. Under current law, this authority is limited to a levy on the taxable interests in real property within the applicable district, but HB 6497 seeks to remove the taxable property limitation and therefore would apply to all interests in real property.

As a result, hospitals that are currently exempt from taxation would have to pay the fee. In our view, this proposed measure, if enacted, would be contrary to the recently approved Settlement Agreement with the state of Connecticut approved by the General Assembly on December 19, 2019 (Agreement). In the Agreement, the state agreed not to impose any new tax on the hospital parties or to repeal or modify any tax exemptions that were available to the hospital parties as of the effective date of the Agreement.

To avoid any conflict with the Agreement, we request that the Committee restore the limitation to "taxable" real property for the stormwater fee in HB 6497 or specifically exclude hospital-owned property.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.