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*Connecticut Chapter*  
*645 Farmington Ave.*  
*Hartford, Connecticut 06105*  
[www.connecticut.sierraclub.org](http://www.connecticut.sierraclub.org)

Environment Committee  
February 21, 2007

Testimony of Martin Mador

In Support of  
HB 6396 AAC The Use of Cleaning Products in State and Municipal Buildings  
and Partial Support of  
HB 6768 AAC The Approval of Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Systems

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the Legislative and Political Chair of the Connecticut Sierra Club, and am here today representing our 11,000 Connecticut members concerned about the health of our environment. For my testimony of HB 6396, I am also here as the legislative co-chair of the Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools. Professionally, I conduct research at the Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. I possess a Master's of Environmental Management degree from Yale.

HB 6396 addresses priorities of the Sierra Club and ConnFESS for the 2007 legislative session. Freeing buildings of toxic substances is an important priority for both organizations. The Governor's Executive Order #14 (April 2006) says:

All state agencies in the executive branch shall procure and use, whenever practicable, cleaning and/or sanitizing products having properties that minimize potential impacts to human health and the environment, consistent with maintaining clean and sanitary State facilities.

It is critically important that we now extend this protection to schools, so that we protect our children, our teachers, and other building staff. This state directive to school districts is economically neutral, as "green" and healthy cleaning products cost no more than their toxic counterparts.

EPA has developed recommendations for safe cleaning products, making sure of their safety through recognized third party certification programs such as Green Seal. This program presents us with an appropriate and easily implemented method of assuring the indoor environments of our schools. A brochure from the Healthy Schools Network explaining the school cleaning programs is attached.

To ensure results, we recommend that the bill be enhanced through:

- compliance deadlines of 50% in year one, and 100% by year two
- development of a training program by the state for maintenance staff
- reporting by schools on progress to implement the program

I recommend the testimony today of my colleague Diane Ethier, which contains additional information on the problem and this effective solution.

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HB 6768 raises an important issue for water quality in the state. I speak here also in my role as a Director of Rivers Alliance, and reference the testimony of our Executive Director, Margaret Miner. Alternative sewage treatment facilities have a very poor performance track record in the state. They can be beneficial in some circumstances, but have the potential to become serious environmental problems, especially for water quality. Even if properly designed and installed, they require ongoing maintenance, with such a requirement a necessary part of a permitting process. We believe the best course of action is to require DEP not to permit them now, but to study these systems and their operational consequences, leaving development of a permitting process to the time when we thoroughly understand them. We suggest a moratorium on permits pending DEP study and recommendations. This issue is addressed in HB 1026, an Act Placing a Moratorium on Alternative On-site Sewage Treatment Systems, which should also go to public hearing.