



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 6, 2009

Ellen Blaschinski, Regulatory Services Branch 509-8171

House Bill 6617 - An Act Concerning Water Supply Plans

The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to House Bill 6617.

The proposed language in section 1 (a), lines 8 to 14 of this bill which the Commissioner of Environmental Protection (DEP) provides concurrent approval with the Department of Public Health only on issues that are not otherwise subject to separate approval by the Commissioner of DEP and may provide comments on any and all aspects of a plan submitted pursuant to this section restricts authority of the Commissioner of the DEP in the approval process. DEP has historically provided valuable comments pertaining to the impact of water supply plans on diversions and fisheries. The Department values DEP's comments as well as their continued participation in this process. The Department respectfully requests the Committee reconsider the amendment and keep the existing language.

The proposed language in section 1 (a), line 27, which amends the interval between revisions of water supply plans from five to ten years may be too lengthy of a period of time. The Department respectfully recommends the Committee consider amending the language to a six-year period between revisions of water supply plans with annual updates of critical information. The water supply plan process plays a critical role in the comprehensive planning of statewide public water supply and a ten year interval between revisions of a plan without any updates will significantly hinder the public water supply planning process and the protection of valuable public water supply sources. The Department recommends the Committee consider amending the bill to give us the ability to grant a three year extension to the revision of water supply plans, provided that the system remains in compliance with mandates prescribed under state law or regulation, maintains adequate annual updates of the plan, and maintains a fifteen percent margin of safety for the average day demand of the twenty year planning period.

Also in Section 1 (a), line 25, the deletion of the current language pertaining to the Commissioner of Public Health's broad discretion to request plan revisions and the proposed substitution of additional language restricts the scope of the Commissioner of Public Health's authority and discretion to request water supply plan revisions and takes away authority of the DPH Commissioner.

The department is continuing to work to implement the following improvements to streamline the preparation and review of water supply plans by:

- Reviewing revisions to water supply plans every six years, with a possible three-year extension, the water supply plan process will be linked with the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act mandated sanitary surveys of public water systems that are conducted by DPH.
- Developing a tabular format to be used by public water systems when revising their water supply plans. Once implemented, the tables will serve as a clear and simplified means of describing system characteristics in the plans and will provide consistency throughout the 84 water supply plans that DPH reviews.
- Provide training and guidance to the public water systems that submit water supply plans.
- Forming a technical advisory committee to work with the water industry

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The Department supports the addition of language in section 1 (b), lines 54 to 58, however we recommend deleting the word "underground" on line 55 so the information provided will include all infrastructure.

DPH looks forward to working with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Connecticut Water Works Association to propose final language for this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.