



## Housatonic Valley Association

150 Kent Road  
P.O. Box 28  
Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754  
860-672-6678

1383 Pleasant Street  
P.O. Box 251  
South Lee, MA 01260  
413-394-9796

19 Furnace Bank Road  
P.O. Box 315  
Wassaic, NY 12592  
845-789-1381

[www.hvatoday.org](http://www.hvatoday.org)

**TO : Senator Edward Meyer and Representative Richard Roy, Co-Chairmen; and Members,  
Environment Committee**

**FROM: Elaine LaBella, Land Protection Director, Housatonic Valley Association**

**DATE : March 16, 2009**

**RE : Raised Bill No. 6345, AN ACT PROTECTING THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE  
HIGHLAND REGION**

On behalf of the Housatonic Valley Association and the Highlands Coalition I am testifying to support Raised Bill 6345, An Act Protecting the Natural resources of the Highlands Region.

The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA), founded in 1941, is a non-profit watershed conservation organization dedicated to preserve the natural character and environmental health of the Housatonic River watershed, covering most of western Connecticut, and portions of southwestern Massachusetts and eastern New York. The Highlands Coalition is a four-state alliance of nearly 200 nonprofit, municipal, state and federal organizations working collaboratively to protect vitally important natural resources in the Appalachian Highlands of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. HVA chairs Connecticut's Highlands Coalition. The Coalition seeks to protect and enhance the sustainability of natural and human communities in the Highlands region of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut by securing federal and state funding for land protection and managing growth. This Congressionally designated nationally-recognized landscape is characterized by a common underlying geology and supplies drinking water to more than fifteen million people, including Hartford, Waterbury, Danbury and Bristol.

This bill acknowledges the importance of protecting the water resources within Connecticut's Highlands. HVA believes that it is critical to protect stream headwaters from excessive water withdrawals to support development. Small, unique headwaters watersheds and streams are frequently considered "significantly different" than larger watersheds and are among the most valuable and ecologically significant water resources in the state.

However, we suggest that the bill be rewritten to provide for a site specific analysis to be conducted for determine the availability of source water for each individual nonmunicipal recreational use requiring a diversion of greater than fifty thousand gallons per day within the Highlands. Not all recreational developments are located where water availability might be constrained and their permits could be granted based on individual water characteristics and attributes. We would be available to work with the Committee to draft suitable language.

In conclusion, HVA believes that this bill is an important step toward protecting the water resources of the Highlands for the benefit of not only those who reside in the twenty-eight Highland towns but also within a major portion of our state.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments for consideration during your deliberations on Raised bill 6345.