



**TESTIMONY**  
**CONNECTICUT WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**BEFORE THE**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**  
**MARCH 6, 2009**

**RE: RB-6617, AN ACT CONCERNING WATER SUPPLY PLANS**

**The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) supports RB-6617, An Act Concerning Water Supply Plans**, which will create efficiencies for the numerous regional, private and municipal water companies engaged in the water supply planning process. As the Department of Public Health mandated water supply planning process has been in place for nearly 25 years now, all water utilities required to develop such plans have approved supply plans in place and are needlessly expending vast resources updating such plans more frequently than may be necessary. Similarly, the State agencies that are obligated to review, comment on, and approve each individual utility supply plan are committing resources to this process that could be more efficiently used, particularly in this current fiscal environment. RB-6617 also includes provisions that would use the current water supply planning process to initiate utility introspection of their current infrastructure rehabilitation and replacement practices. Such introspection is intended to create greater awareness of and an increased commitment to the sustainability of underground infrastructure assets. At the same time, incorporating an infrastructure component into an existing regulatory program is more efficient than creating a new mechanism to address water utility infrastructure needs.

Currently, all water companies that serve more than 1,000 persons or 250 or more customers are required to develop water supply plans for 5, 20 and 50 year planning horizons that detail, among other things, their currently available water supply, water quality, and treatment capacity; examine potential future water supply needs; and explore how the utility will meet the current and future water supply needs for their customers. These plans serve as a valuable tool for the utilities and the regulators to ensure that there is a long term view for water supplies in Connecticut.

Water companies are required to update their plans on a schedule determined by the Department of Public Health (DPH), which is typically every five years from the date of the last submission. However, Sec. 25-32d(a) of the General Statutes requires the intervals of plan updates be not less than three years nor more than five years after the date of initial approval. The practice historically has been to fully update/revise and resubmit a new plan at these intervals. These updates can be costly and time-consuming for utilities to prepare, as well as for the various state agencies, including the DPH, Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Public Utility Control, and the office of Policy and Management who review the plans. While a few larger utilities may perform all or part of the work internally, most utilities are forced to rely on consultants to do their plans. Either way, considerable costs are expended to develop these plan updates even though circumstances within the utility's scope of operations may not warrant an update. Further, because of the short time frame between updates and the fact that state agency review often takes a long time, utilities constantly find themselves either responding to staff comments or preparing for a new plan revision.

The proposed changes would lengthen the timeframe between required revisions, while preserving DPH's ability to require updates in those circumstances where changing conditions warrant. In those circumstances where little has changed in the status quo of the water system, an expanded timeframe would allow water companies, municipalities and state agencies to avoid the significant time and expense associated with each plan revision.

Finally, since the onset of this process, there have been complications and uncertainty regarding the language that requires 'concurrence' from the other agencies on these plans. In some cases, plan approval has been considerably delayed or withheld due to concerns raised by DEP over issues for which agency permits and approvals would later be required – were the utility to ever pursue implementing the project (which in some cases could be perhaps as much as twenty years down the road). We recognize the validity of DEP's concerns in these cases and value the input of staff who may worry that granting concurrence may somehow be seen as an endorsement of a future activity or set an expectation of approval, when sought. While it is useful that they raise their concerns, such matters would more appropriately be vetted during any subsequent permitting and approval processes with the department. In these types of situations where DEP has the ability and authority to issue a permit or approval under separate authority, it would not be unreasonable for DEP's comments to be viewed as guidance only and not require their concurrence for supply plan approval.

CWWA is continuing to have discussions with Department of Public Health Staff on ways that the Water Supply Plan process can be streamlined. We appreciate the efforts now being made by the department to develop an in-house review process that will potentially provide a faster approval process. While we urge support of RB-6617, we will also continue to work with the DPH to ensure that any final language meets their requirements as the administering agency.

*The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWWA) is an association of public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut. Membership in the Association is open to all Connecticut water utilities: investor-owned, municipal and regional authorities. CWWA is committed to working with the state to develop policies that will ensure that Connecticut has a safe, ample supply of water to meet present and future needs.*