Independent Electrical Contractors of New England, Inc.

To: **Public Health Committee**
From: **Lisa Hutner**
Date: **March 12, 2010-03-11**
Re: **HB-5477 – SUPPORT**

The Independent Electrical Contractors of New England (IEC-NE) ***support HB-5477*** which will help address concerns with proposed stream flow regulations that are threatening to undermine construction in this state.

As drafted, proposed stream flow regulations will hurt the construction industry by unnecessarily limiting economic growth in various regions across the state. The uncertainty regarding whether or not the regulations will be implemented as currently drafted is creating some anxiety with members, particularly in those towns that may face construction moratoriums. We therefore applaud committee members for considering legislation to address these concerns.

By unfairly mandating that more water be released to streams and rivers in this state without any consideration of how these releases will affect water supplies needed to operate businesses, build and renovate new homes, and provide drinking water for residents, these regulations will hurt Connecticut's economy and overall quality of life. Section 2(b) of the bill addresses this concern by ensuring that water supplies needed for economic development and public health are protected.

The proposed regulations raise too many questions regarding whether there will be moratoriums on construction in some areas and whether we will face lengthy water use restrictions when water supplies run low because so much has been released into our rivers and streams. Although we understand that the regulations are intended to benefit the trout and other freshwater fish, it doesn't make sense to release water that may be needed by people for drinking water, sanitation, fire protection, and business operations.

The regulations will also lead to water rate increases and further delays in moving forward with construction projects that will create much-needed jobs. Instead of pushing for more burdensome, costly regulations with an understanding of the short and long-term economic impact to the state, the state Department (DEP) should focus on fixing its broken permitting processes and enforcing the current laws on the books to protect water resources from pollution.

Connecticut has lost more than 100,000 jobs since March 2008 and is expected to lose additional jobs in 2010. The state is also facing a multi-billion dollar deficit and must take immediate steps to reduce the size of government. Moving forward with new, overreaching regulations that may bring construction to a standstill in some communities is certainly not the way to address the state's economic woes or budget crisis.

Hopefully, HB-5477 will help address these concerns.

The Independent Electrical Contractors of New England is the premier trade association representing Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island independent electrical contractors aggressively working with the industry to establish a free environment for merit shop -- a philosophy that promotes the concept of free enterprise, open competition and economic opportunity for all.

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