Greater New Haven
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Bethany Branford Cheshire East Haven Guilford Hamden Milford New Haven North Branford North Haven Orange Wallingford West Haven Woodbridge

Testimony
Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce
Before the Public Health Committee
March 12, 2010

The Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce, which includes approximately 2,000 businesses, **supports HB-5477** to address concerns with the state Department of Environmental Protection's proposed stream flow regulations. As drafted, the proposed regulations will have significant negative impacts on the amount of water available to meet the public health and safety needs of our state's businesses. These concerns should be addressed by legislation, as called for in HB-5477.

Although we support efforts to protect the state's aquatic life, we are concerned that the proposed regulations do so to the detriment of the state's public health, safety and economic development. Under the proposed regulations, water companies and other large water users will have to release significant quantities of water into the streams during six different periods of the year regardless of whether they have sufficient water supplies to meet the existing needs of their customers. Restrictions on groundwater withdrawals will also severely curtail the water available for the people and businesses of the state. This will undermine our economic competitiveness and quality of life by tipping the balance between competing water uses and placing the water needs of the state's aquatic life above all other needs.

Many water companies are also questioning whether they will have sufficient water supplies to support new development and residential construction. Without continued growth, our economy will stagnate. In addition, the proposed regulations will unnecessarily restrict water use during various periods of the year, which may be disruptive, particularly for those businesses that rely on a reliable supply of water, such as farmers, green house growers, hospitals, nursing homes, manufacturers and restaurants.

Moreover, the proposed regulations will require costly infrastructure changes, the development of new reservoirs and wells and require additional personnel and training to monitor flows and make the releases, all of which will translate into higher rates for water customers. This will add to the already high cost of doing business in this state, undermining our economic competitiveness.

Unnecessary and overreaching regulations have contributed to the tremendous cost of state government as well as the cost of doing business. Connecticut must reduce the size and cost of state government and address its escalating deficit before moving forward with additional comprehensive regulations that raise too many questions about whether we will have sufficient water supplies to support the business community and citizens of this state.

We therefore support HB-5477, which will help ensure that DEP resumes its work with the Commissioner's advisory groups to draft more balanced, less intrusive and less costly stream flow regulations.

Anthony P. Rescigno

Anthony P. Rescigno
President
Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce

900 Chapel Street 10th Floor New Haven, Connecticut 06510-2811 Tel: (203) 787-6735 Fax: (203) 782-4329
info@gnhcc.com www.gnhcc.com