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Written Testimony in opposition to Bill 5477
An Act Concerning the Clean Water Act and Streamflow Regulations

I am writing today as a member of the Nutmeg Chapter of Trout Unlimited, to express my opposition to House Bill 5477 – An Act Concerning the Clean Water Act and Streamflow Regulations.

In particular, Section 2 of this bill seeks to circumvent the legislative and regulatory process already in place to develop Streamflow Regulations by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This regulation process was created following Public Act 05-142, which the General Assembly passed unanimously in 2005.

Over the past 5 years, the DEP has worked in coordination with other state agencies and the various stakeholders involved in the consumption and use of Connecticut's public water to draft these Streamflow Regulations. The draft regulations created by the DEP following this public and open process balance the needs of all water users in the state.

The regulations ensure an adequate supply of water for drinking and other consumptive uses such as agriculture and industry, while also ensuring river flows remain adequate for recreational use and ecological health.

Section 2 of HB 5477 would impose a new requirement for a study of all basins in the state and a new process for approval and adoption. The DEP's currently proposed Streamflow Regulations already accomplish this by including a basin classification system which is open, transparent and allows adequate time for public input.

The inclusion of Section 2 in this bill would only delay the process already in place and prohibit efforts already underway to ensure a balanced approach is taken to Connecticut's public water management that protects the rights of all users.

I ask that you reject HB 5477 and allow the comprehensive and thoughtful process developed in the proposed Streamflow Regulations to move forward.