

Jeffrey S. Bond
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Public Health Committee
Room 3000, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-240-0560

Public Testimony for Support and Approval of S.B. No. 428, Section 63 as amended;

There shall be a rebuttable presumption that the commissioner shall approve an application for a general permit to allow the installation of a dry hydrant in an area where there is no alternative access to a public water supply.

Mr. Chairman
Members of the Public Health Committee

My name is Jeffrey S. Bond. I am a resident of Burlington Connecticut and a member of Burlington Volunteer Fire Department. I would like to support S.B. No. 428, Section 63 as amended; There shall be a rebuttable presumption that the commissioner shall approve an application for a general permit to allow the installation of a dry hydrant in an area where there is no alternative access to a public water supply.

The purpose of this Bill is to facilitate the inland wetlands activity permit process for a dry hydrant if there is no alternative access to a public water supply. Variations in local regulations delay the permit process and inhibit the development of dry hydrants. Firefighters lack the resources, time and expertise to complete the various permit applications necessary under the current system. During the past year, two dry hydrant applications in Burlington took over nine months to obtain the permits necessary to install the hydrants. This proposed legislation helps simplify and establishes a uniform statewide process for dry hydrant permits.

Dry hydrants are permanent structures placed into a water resource, (lake, pond or stream) that enables many rural State of Connecticut fire departments to access water for fire suppression. In many parts of the State, there are no public water supplies. Fire departments, many of them volunteer, must rely on water from portable tankers, ponds, or streams to provide the water necessary to put out a structure fire. A fire in Simsbury in 2009 required an estimated 90,000 gallons of water, over 800 gallons per minute to provide for firefighter safety and fire suppression.

A dry hydrant provides the fire department access to large volumes of water everyday. These hydrants are placed in water below the ground frost and surface ice enabling them to be used in every season. They provide a reliable water resource to the fire officer, reduce homeowner insurance rates, provide for increased firefighter safety and keep very large fire tanker trucks from multiple emergency trips to and from a water source.

This amendment will allow many rural fire departments to take advantage of a single agency with the resources, knowledge and expertise to help strategically develop dry hydrants for fire protection. Currently, the Department of Environmental Protection (D.E.P.) is the lead agency for the distribution of federal funding that supports dry hydrant development and placement.

In 2007, the 242 Connecticut Fire Departments submitted loss reports in excess of \$56,000,000. There were 235 reports of civilian injuries and 25 civilian deaths. Dry Hydrants provide the necessary fire protection in rural areas not serviced by public water supplies. A recent dry hydrant installed in Burlington cost \$2,300.00 after a \$1,000.00 grant provided through the D.E.P.

A dry hydrant is cost effective, has a minimal impact on the environment, reduces homeowners' insurance rates and improves firefighter safety.

S.B. No. 428 as amended is designed to facilitate and increase the development of dry hydrants in Connecticut. It will provide for a more efficient permit process that increases Public Safety.

Please support your local fire services by supporting S.B. No. 428.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey S. Bond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "B".

Jeffrey S. Bond

Enclosures