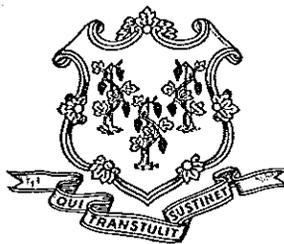


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Judiciary Committee

State of Connecticut  
SENATE

January 31, 2011

Testimony to the Environment Committee  
House Bill 5068 and Senate Bill 831

Thank you Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and Members of the Environment Committee,

My name is Beth Bye, State Senator for the 5<sup>th</sup> district, representing West Hartford, Farmington, Burlington and Bloomfield.

I am here today in strong support of **House Bill 5068**, which would allow fire departments, in the interest of public safety, to proceed more quickly with the instillation of dry hydrants in rural areas without ready access to a public water supply.

A dry hydrant, for those members who were not here when this bill was discussed two years ago, is a structure which is placed into a body of water which allows a fire department to hook-up and draw water from a source during all seasons. Such a structure is necessary in instances where access to a hydrant is non-existent. The existence of a dry hydrant, particularly during times of inclement weather, or where there is hilly terrain, dramatically increases the ability of a fire department to fight a fire. Such a hydrant increases the safety of firefighters and the general public by preventing the hauling of water repeatedly over long distances.

I also want to take a moment to address concerns that CCM raised in 2009, that such a bill would "tilt the playing field" away from Inlands-Wetlands Commissions. I believe that there are few instances where a rebuttable presumption is warranted. I also believe that public safety is one such instance.

I asked that this bill be raised because a gentleman whom you will hear from later, a volunteer firefighter from Burlington, explained that the process for a permit in Burlington was taking longer than seemed necessary.

These hydrants, by their very nature, cause a minimal disruption to wetlands and are only activated in the case of an emergency or for maintenance. They enhance public safety, and provide benefits for nearby homeowners by way of decreased insurance rates. For these reasons, I encourage the Committee to JF this bill.

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I would also like to take a moment to lend my support to **Senate Bill 831**, a measure which would extend the same land owner liability protections to towns and municipal corporations currently enjoyed by personal property owners.

Such a liability protection is necessary to keep public lands freely available for recreation, and does not excuse the town, state, or municipal corporation from liability which arises from purposeful misconduct or ignorance of a dangerous condition on a property, but offers enough of a guard against an accident which may occur, which is otherwise unavoidable except by closing the property to the public.

I am happy to have co-introduced a version of this bill in the Judiciary Committee. Several other versions of this bill have been introduced in Environment, Judiciary, and Planning and Development from members both House and Senate, and Democrat and Republican. I believe this bill is a necessary side effect of large court settlements and is a responsible way to keep these lands open for all to use.

Thank You.