



**Testimony
Elizabeth Gara
Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA)
Before the
Energy Committee
February 17, 2011**

Re: HB-6023 AN ACT CONCERNING UTILITY COLLECTION AGENCIES.

The Connecticut Water Works Association, a trade association of public, private and regional water companies, ***opposes*** HB-6023, which would unnecessarily require utility companies to inform collection agencies when a customer has paid their bill.

In order to minimize costs associated with debt collection, it is certainly in the utility company's interest to inform collection agencies when a debt is paid. However, there may be some lag between the time the debt is paid and processed and when this is communicated and recorded by the collection agency.

Utility companies that use collection agencies must comply with extensive state and federal laws to protect consumers from unfair debt collection practices. These laws grant consumers certain rights, including the right to request that the collection agency validate a debt. The collection agency may not contact the consumer until the debt is validated.

These laws strike the appropriate balance between debt collection and consumer rights. It does not seem appropriate to revise Connecticut's Debt Collection Practices law in the manner called for in the bill.