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**Labor and Public Employees Committee  
February 10, 2011**

**HB 5460 *An Act Concerning Captive Audience Meetings***

**Connecticut Water Company opposes HB 5460 AAC *Captive Audience Meetings*.**  
We believe it would seriously undermine our business and opportunities to communicate openly and effectively with our employees on matters of importance.

Connecticut Water Company is a public water utility that provides water service to nearly 90,000 customers in 55 communities throughout Connecticut. We employ over 200 people and are proud of our long record of customer service, regulatory compliance and environmental stewardship. Like so many businesses in Connecticut, we are working hard to meet the needs of our customers and our employees, and remain competitive in this economy.

We feel it is very important to maintain open communications with employees and are committed to a work environment where there is regular dialogue on various matters affecting our employees, our operations, and our business as well as broader state or federal issues regarding the regulatory or economic climate. Particularly in these challenging times, we want to be partnering with our employees, with shared goals for success and not restricted from openly discussing issues. Putting such restrictions will only be an impediment to businesses and jobs in Connecticut.

Our employees are bright and capable and should be informed and able to make their own decisions about whether to further pursue issues, as constituents and stakeholders. As such, we believe prohibiting us from discussing specific matters is counterproductive and unnecessary.

While the focus of this type of legislation has historically been to deal with labor organizing matters, the protections under the National Labor Relations Act provide the necessary parameters for employers' communications on such issues so no additional legislation in Connecticut is necessary.

As drafted, the bill would prevent us from communicating with employees about activities of government, which would include the very laws that we must comply with to meet our service obligations – including those regarding water quality, environment and public health or safety. The proposed bill, it would prevent us from updating employees on these requirements or from soliciting input from the employees who are most knowledgeable of the impact of proposed legislative or regulatory initiatives.

**We urge the Committee to reject HB 5460 AAC *Captive Audience Meetings*.**