

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
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Testimony to the Environment Committee

Raised Bill 6503, An Act Concerning Conservation District Funding

March 7, 2011

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (SCCRWA) is a non-profit, public corporation and political subdivision of the State. Our mission is to provide our customers with high quality water at a reasonable cost while promoting the preservation of watershed land and aquifers. We provide approximately 51 million gallons of water per day to an estimated 430,000 consumers in our region. The source of this water is a system of watershed and aquifer areas that cover about 120 square miles within 24 municipalities. More than 27,000 acres of these watershed and aquifer areas are protected as open space as a result of the Authority's efforts and efforts with partners. Within the 20 member towns of our water district, we own and operate a public water system, which includes 10 active reservoirs, 4 surface water treatment plants and 7 ground water treatment plants.

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority is pleased to provide testimony in support of Raised Bill 6503, An Act Concerning Conservation District Funding.

The work of the Southwest Conservation District (the District that covers most of SCCRWA's region) has both direct and indirect source water protection benefits to the Authority.

The Conservation District has:

- Inventoried direct stormwater outfalls to the Lake Whitney public drinking water supply reservoir in Hamden. This information was useful in determining which outfalls would be suited for constructed wetlands systems for treating contaminants in urban stormwater runoff. To date five such wetland treatment systems have been constructed around Lake Whitney.
- Assisted in SCCRWA source protection efforts by submitting comments on site plans to local land use commissions. Their expertise on stream bank protection and wetland restoration as well as their participation in the Connecticut Environmental Review Team has offered a non-biased evaluation of environmental impacts of development projects that would be cost prohibitive for the SCCRWA to undertake.

Indirectly, the Conservation Districts efforts have benefited source protection efforts through:

- Educational outreach and training efforts has improved the decision making skills of local land use commission members.
- Technical assistance to homeowners regarding wetland buffer and stream bank protection has brought about environmentally sound solutions to erosion and wetland encroachment issues.

The work of the Council on Soil and Water Conservation is so essential to providing solutions to enhance the state's watershed and aquifer protection that we believe the Council should have a dedicated source of funding. We strongly urge the Environment Committee to approve Raised HB 6503 to provide funding for the Conservation Districts so they can continue to provide these valuable services. Thank you for considering our request. Please contact John Hudak, SCCRWA Environmental Planning Manager, (203-401-2733; jhudak@rwater.com) with any questions or if you would like additional information.