

**South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority**  
90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut 06511-5966 203-562-4020  
<http://www.rwater.com>

## Testimony to the Environment Committee

### **Raised Bill 5130, An Act Concerning the Dam Safety Program**

February 22, 2012

*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 50 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 6 ground water treatment plants.*

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (SCCRWA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments to the Environment Committee regarding Raised Bill 5130, An Act Concerning the Dam Safety Program.

SCCRWA currently maintains 31 dams and does so with a combination of in-house engineering staff and outside professional engineers. We inspect our dams at an annual cost of approximately \$50,000. SCCRWA does not rely upon DEEP staff for inspection or monitoring of our dams. All construction work at our dams is already overseen by licensed professional engineers. While we agree in general with the portions of the bill strengthening the requirement for professional inspection and supervision of construction, we cannot agree with the suggested fees that do not provide any benefit to owners of dams and appear to lessen DEEP's responsibilities to some dam owners. While we can appreciate the fiscal constraints DEEP and the State of Connecticut are under we have to oppose HB 5130 as written.

Of particular concern to SCCRWA is Section 3(3), lines 159-163, of HB 5130 which would set fees for each Class C high hazard dam at \$4,500 each (in SCCRWA's case that is 14 dams) and each Class B significant hazard dam at \$2,500 each (in SCCRWA's case that is 2 dams) resulting in an annual cost of \$68,000. These fees would be in addition to the approximately \$50,000 that SCCRWA already spends annually on dam inspections. SCCRWA would derive no benefit at all from the proposed fees or the other provisions of the bill.

The revenues SCCRWA receives to pay for operating and maintenance costs as well as its capital improvements come directly from the district's ratepayers. As a result of several years of

declining water demand due to a dwindling economy, intense natural rainfall and the use of increased water conservation devices and appliances in customers' homes and businesses, SCCRWA's revenue will continue to decline. Any increased state agency fees have to be passed on to our customers. As responsible dam owners, we should not have to pass along the financial burden of funding DEEP's resources for irresponsible dam owners.

Finally, we believe the language in Section 3(a), lines 51-57, is confusing. We ask for clarification that this language does not mean a registered professional engineer (PE) must remain onsite while all dam or other structure work is being done. We believe lower level consultant staff, supervised by PE's with weekly PE visits to the site, should meet the intent of the bill.

The Regional Water Authority appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions on HB 5130. Thank you for your attention to our suggestions. We would be pleased to provide further information or work with the department and the committee on ways to improve the bill as discussed above.