



Testimony
Elizabeth Gara
Executive Director
Connecticut Water Works Association (CWVA)
Before the
Environment Committee
March 15, 2013

RE: HB- 6537 - AN ACT CONCERNING WATER QUALITY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWVA) is an association of private, municipal and regional public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut.

As stewards of the state's water resources and environment, Connecticut's water companies have been committed to numerous efforts to protect the state's water resources and environment, including stream flow regulations, open space preservation, aquifer protection, and source water protection. We take our responsibility seriously and routinely work with other stakeholders to provide for the stewardship of the water resources of the state.

CWVA does not have a position on HB-6537 inasmuch as water companies are already subject to the state's water supply plan, aquifer protection and water quality requirements. However, we understand that there have been discussions regarding diversion permits and whether there should be changes to the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's water diversion program.

The Water Diversion Program, administered by the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), requires a permit to "conduct activities which result in the alteration of surface water flows, and withdrawals of surface and ground water exceeding 50,000 gallons in any 24-hour period." DEEP is required to consider certain factors in making a decision regarding a permit application, including the environmental effects of the diversion and whether the proposed diversion: 1) is necessary, 2) is consistent with long-range water resource management, 3) is consistent with the state plan of conservation and development; and 4) will not impair proper management and use of the water resources of the State.

Water companies rely on the Water Diversion program to ensure that we have safe, adequate supplies of water to meet the public health, safety and economic development needs of the state. Again, although we do not have a specific position on this bill, if proposals are developed that would impact the Water Diversion Program or other policies affecting the state's water supplies, we respectfully request that we be included as a stakeholder in those discussions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.