

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
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Testimony to the Energy and Technology Committee

March 7, 2013

SB-1035 AN ACT CONCERNING REGULATION OF WATER COMPANIES

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA) 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 48 million gallons of water per day to almost 500,000 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. Much of our 27,000 acres of land is managed for watershed protection, timber resource conservation, wildlife habitat, open space, education, and research.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the Energy and Technology Committee
Opposing Raised Senate Bill 1035, An Act Concerning Regulation of Water Companies

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, (RWA) was created in 1977 and 1978 by special act (77-98 and 78-24) by the Connecticut General Assembly and further amended in subsequent years for the primary and public purpose of providing and assuring the provision of an adequate supply of quality water at reasonable cost within the District and, to the degree consistent with the foregoing, of advancing water conservation along with the compatible use of land held by the Authority for recreation.

Those Special Acts provide for a Representative Policy Board (RPB) which is comprised of one representative from each city or town within the District who is appointed by the chief elected official of the city or town, with the approval of its legislative body, as well as one representative who is appointed by the governor. The RPB, in turn, is responsible for appointing an "Authority" comprised of five members, which serves as a board of directors.

The 1977 and 1978 special acts provide the broad powers necessary for the RWA to carry out its legislative mandate. It is important to note that members of the RPB Board and the "Authority" reside in the communities they represent. They understand the needs of their community and represent their constituents in matters related to all aspects of the service we provide. The RPB regulates rates and services fulfilling a similar role to the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority for private utilities.

The RWA is further regulated by the Department of Public Health (DPH) through its Drinking Water Section (DWS) in all matters related to the protection of public water drinking supplies. The DWS is required by the US Environmental Protection Agency to be responsible for the administration of state and federal drinking water regulations and is dedicated to ensuring the adequacy and quality of the State of Connecticut's public drinking water sources. Investor-owned utilities regulated by PURA for rates and services are also under DPH regulations for the quality and quantity of water provided by water systems.

Reorganizing the regulation of water companies from the DPH to PURA would remove all public health regulatory control and expertise from a department of an agency whose mission, knowledge, experience, and purpose is to protect public drinking water supplies and public health. Public drinking water supplies including water divisions within municipalities would then be regulated by an agency whose main purpose is to establish fair and equitable rates exclusively for private utilities.

RWA strongly believes that the regulation of water quality for public consumption should remain with the DPH who has the experience and expertise to provide that oversight.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our concerns. If you have any questions please contact, Lori Vitagliano, Government and Public Relations Specialist at 203-401-2720, or lvitagliano@rwater.com