



Farmington River Watershed Association, Inc.

749 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070

(860) 658-4442 Fax (860) 651-7519 www.frwa.org

March 19, 2013

To: The Energy and Technology Committee

From: Farmington River Watershed Association

Testimony on S.B. 1138, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Clean Energy Goals

Dear Chairman Duff, Chairman Reed, and Members of the Committee:

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Farmington River Watershed Association, a private non-profit citizens group with a 60-year history of advocating a healthy river. We represent over 1,000 member households and have several partner organizations in the Farmington Valley, as well as good working relationships with many Farmington Valley towns. We are familiar with the effects of dams and hydro on our own river and this energy bill raises serious concerns.

Hydropower is widely considered to be desirable because it is a source of low-carbon-emission energy. While hydropower does not pollute in the conventional sense, it destroys many functions of free-flowing rivers. Rivers are highways which convey nutrients and organisms up and downstream, maintaining the river's productivity and value as a natural resource. The effect of hydro development on the natural economy of a river is roughly equivalent to the effect on commerce if Interstate I-95 were interrupted with concrete walls. But the effects go further than interrupting the arrival of high-quality nutritious fish from the Atlantic Ocean. Damming can drop oxygen concentrations, raise water temperatures, promote methane emissions from sediment, and derange the seasonal flow variations that river flora and fauna depend upon.

Presumably for these reasons, Class I renewable energy generation originally did not include any hydropower. **If hydropower is to be admitted as a Class I energy source, at the very least it should be subject to the following limitations:**

- Class I hydropower should be run of river, rather than allowed to impound water to meet peak demand needs. We strongly encourage the state to find alternate ways of dealing with peak demands, starting with more strategies to reduce energy use during predictable peak periods.
- Class I hydropower should not include energy imported from HydroQuebec; this is simply promoting destruction of other rivers in Canada. Also, resorting to this source quells the much-needed incentive to develop local Class I energy sources from wind and solar power. We encourage the state to place more emphasis on local innovations that provide alternative energy in ways that are not destructive to rivers. That's preferable to taking a short-cut to meeting Class I quotas that violates the whole reason for the requirement.

In summary, we strongly encourage the state to keep the requirement that Class I hydropower be run-of-river only; refrain from giving power from HydroQuebec Class I

status; and focus on ways of meeting or reducing peak demand that do not require more impoundment of rivers in CT.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eileen Fielding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Eileen Fielding
Executive Director