

Re: Testimony in opposition to: S. B. 840: AN ACT CONCERNING NEXT GENERATION CONNECTICUT

To: Senator Fonfara and Representative Widlitz and distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

I would like the committee accept my testimony in opposition to SB840.

Since 1984, my husband and I live in Mansfield, a small town with 24,884 population (2007). We chose Mansfield to settle in because of its rural beauty and cultural opportunities. But, if SB 840 is adopted, the town will no longer be rural and quiet.

There seems to be a trend in the legislature nowadays not to consult or to inform the locals about the big changes coming in their towns. For example, recently Mansfield residents were jolted by announcements of UConn Technology Park (tech park) and UConn NextGen, which will cause huge environmental impact on Mansfield and the surrounding towns.

I wonder if any research and consideration have gone into these projects in terms of environment and the burden on the locals' everyday lives. To start with, Mansfield is a small town; its substructure cannot accommodate all the population these projects will bring.

UConn is very ecstatic about these projects, but how many of its administrators, faculty and students will stay in these towns? It is the locals who will live with the consequences.

What will follow these projects are water and new road needs.

UConn has outstripped local water supplies and must seek water from elsewhere to develop its tech park and UConn NextGen. The Environmental Impact Evaluation for UConn Additional Source(s) of Water Supply considered alternatives, among which are provision of water from Connecticut Water Co. (CWC) would draw upon the Shenipsit Reservoir (\$20M), from Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) would draw upon the Barkhamsted and Nepaug Reservoirs in the Farmington River basin (\$51M), Windham Water Works (WWW) would draw upon the Willimantic Reservoir, an impoundment of the Natchaug River (\$20M).

Each of these alternatives will be costly and detrimental to the environment and land use and will have negative socioeconomic impact and "must overcome financial, technical, regulatory, and contractual hurdles to become a reality, any one of which could prevent the alternative from moving forward." (University of Connecticut - Potential Sources of Water Supply CEPA Environmental Impact Evaluation November 2012 ES-12)

For the increased student and staff population there may be a need for new routes from Storrs to different areas of Connecticut. UConn student newspaper UConn Daily Campus, in one of their issues, was discussing this need already.

Both tech park and NextGen projects would be better in a location which has adequate water supply and access to the highways, because Mansfield does not have either.

I have also questions to be considered:

Will amount of money allocated for this project improve the quality of education in UConn? Are there any serious research reports of UConn's educational quality?

Have UConn 2000 and 2001 helped to improve the economy of Connecticut? Is there any evidence to prove if there are any?

The idea seems to be to increase student enrollment. How many of these students will be from Connecticut? What is the answer to the question 3 of Office of Legislative Research's Questions for UConn Board of Trustees' Nominee: "Demographic projections indicate that Connecticut will have a decreasing number of high school graduates in the near future. How will this affect UConn's plan to increase enrollment?" (OLR, 2013-R-0154.HTM)

Will Connecticut be able to create jobs for the graduates?

UConn has a long and problematic history of fighting with Mansfield residents. It is difficult to win a dispute against UConn, which has publicly funded staff and help of Connecticut Attorney General. UConn Landfill, UConn's siting its hazardous materials in Fenton rivershed, and the need for the recent bills HB5480 (2013): An act requiring an assessment of the use of certain pesticides at the University of Connecticut Research Farm and Bill No: 6537 (2013): The University of Connecticut at Storrs to comply with certain water supply plans, consumer information and mapping requirements that are currently applicable to water companies and to classify certain lands of The University of Connecticut at Storrs for purposes of public health regulations." are some of the examples.

Therefore, I respectfully request the committee consider not passing this bill.

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