



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MARY M. MUSHINSKY
EIGHTY-FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4038
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
HOME: (203) 269-8378
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8500
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267
E-mail: Mary.Mushinsky@cga.ct.gov

CO-CHAIR
PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FINANCE REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

**Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85th) in Support of HB 6537, An Act
Concerning Water Quality and the University of Connecticut**

**Before the Environment Committee
March 15, 2013**

In 2003, the Program Review and Investigations Committee issued a Streamflow Report which found that the state failed to plan for sustainable, long term water management although required to do so by 1967 law. The report recommended that the state strengthen the Connecticut Water Planning Council and create a statewide water supply planning process. There is a water utility coordinating (WUCC) process but it is limited to the water controlled by each individual utility, where such utility exists. There is no planning where a utility does not exist, in the UConn region of the state.

In 1996, the Water Allocation Task Force at DEEP looked at the need for accurate water resource data. The legislature in 1998 had the CT DEEP catalogue existing water diversions. In 2001 the legislature created the Water Planning Council to craft a more sustainable system. Then in 2003, the Program Review and Investigations Committee generated their report on the failure of the state's long range water planning, triggering a multi-year effort to pass a Connecticut Streamflow law and adopt regulations to ensure the survival of rivers and streams. All these actions sought to create a sustainable system to protect water for generations to come.

The DEEP has just begun the lengthy process of preparing basin plans (i.e. "water budgets") for each major river basin, starting from eastern Connecticut and working westward. This science-based water budgeting does not yet include groundwater

(subsurface water supplies) and will need to include this resource in the future to create accurate basin plans.

Also pending this year is a bill to change the way water is priced to promote conservation. Energy and Technology Committee has endorsed SB 807 which will change water rates in such a way as to encourage water efficiency technology and reduce waste. If passed, this bill will enhance sustainable use of water in Connecticut and go a long way to stretch our water resources.

In Eastern Connecticut, growth in and around UConn appears to be happening faster than water planning. The campus is the equivalent of a fast-growing city in a rural area. UConn has outstripped local water supplies and must seek water from elsewhere to develop its technology park. In the absence of a regional water company and incomplete state water planning, we should require some entity--the university?--to plan in compliance with state water company laws and scientifically assess their water resources and transfers.

Ten years after the PRI Committee report, a statewide water plan is still not in place. The science, in the form of basin plans, has just started. Considering this regulatory gap, I support a water management and stewardship structure for the fast-growing UConn area such as the one suggested in HB 6537. If the Environment Committee waits until the technology park is developed, it will be too late.