

Testimony of H.B. 6537

I support H.B. 6537 in its effort to have UCONN regulated as a water utility. The state has determined that it is in the public interest to have the Department of Public Health regulate most water utilities to ensure both water quality and adequate supply. When any water utility is allowed to supply water under voluntary compliance with regulations that are legally enforced for other similar organizations, there is a great likelihood that it will take shortcuts and fail to comply. Voluntary compliance with Department of Public Health requirements for drinking water carries a large risk for consumers. UCONN should not be given a pass on water utility regulations.

The circumstances surrounding problems of drinking water and the University of Connecticut reflect a serious problem facing the citizens of Connecticut: the lack of a comprehensive, state-wide water use plan. As a citizen of the Farmington Valley, I am involved in efforts to protect the Farmington River because it is critical to wildlife, to the quality of life in the Valley and to various small businesses in the Valley towns. Because of this involvement, I have learned something about the disorganized state of water management in Connecticut. UCONN's recent bid to augment its water supply includes a proposal to transport water from the already stressed Farmington River to UCONN and Mansfield. This proposal underlines the need for a comprehensive approach to water supply both for drinking water and to meet environmental needs across the state.. UCONN's water planning should be imbedded in such a planning process.

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