



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
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**Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85th) in Support of HB 6575, An Act Concerning
Certain State Grants to Towns**

Before the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
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HB 6575 contains Section 2, which would increase the reimbursement rate for nutrient removal (including phosphorus) at municipal sewage treatment plants from 30 to 50%. This section is similar to HB 5800 which Environment Committee referred to Finance, Revenue and Bonding earlier this year. Phosphorus removal is a new and expensive requirement for two regions of the state: South Central Connecticut, where my district lies, and greater Danbury. In these two regions, CT DEEP is currently issuing new treatment plant permits under the federal Clean Water Act which require substantial phosphorus removal, as the plants generate phosphorus at a rate up to 66 times the amount found in nature. This significant concentration, according to scientists, causes excessive algae and cyanobacteria growth and reduced oxygen in both the rivers and Long Island Sound. In both regions, large urbanized populations discharge to a relatively small river. In addition, in my region there are impoundments on the river which further increase the impact of phosphorus.

Because these new permits require an interim reduction of phosphorus to 0.7 (a concession to the towns) and the next permit in 5 years will likely require a much tighter reduction (perhaps as low as 0.1) to meet U.S. EPA's requirement that the impairment be corrected, it is clear that these two regions are facing significant new costs that do not affect other Connecticut municipalities. It is therefore appropriate that the reimbursement rate be set at the same rate as the reimbursement for combined sewer overflow projects, which also affect only certain older cities and are funded at 50%, the highest reimbursement rate under current law.