



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE February 20, 2013

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Senate Bill 230 - An Act Concerning Swimming in Certain Bodies of Water

The Department of Public Health opposes Senate Bill 230.

This bill will amend the CGS to allow for swimming in any body of water where flood-skimming is used to transfer excess water from the body of water to a distribution reservoir during periods when flood-skimming is not occurring, providing swimming has been permitted in the body of water for not less than fifty years.

CGS Section 25-43 prohibits swimming within a drinking water reservoir or any tributaries within two miles of a drinking water reservoir. Swimming creates a public health risk for drinking water supplies. Swimming can introduce viral pathogens into the water supply. Connecticut has had no recent waterborne disease outbreaks; this is due in part to maintaining our state's strict laws that protect our limited water supply resources. The General Assembly recently validated the importance of this statute in passing Public Act 08-137, which increased the fines associated with violations of this statute. Similar to storage of animal excrement within 100' of a reservoir (prohibited by RCSA Section 19-13-B32), restrictions on uses of aquatic pesticides in reservoir tributaries (CGS Section 22a-66z), or a prohibition on sewage discharges upstream of reservoirs (CGS Section 22a-417), swimming incrementally increases the risk to public health and could further strain required treatment processes.

The Department, as always, is willing to work with utilities that may have historically utilized flood skimming operations in water bodies where swimming occurs to supplement their water supplies. This can be accomplished without modifying the statutes that protect our water supplies.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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