



TOWN OF VERNON

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Comments Submitted to the General Assembly February 19, 2014

Re: Raised Bill No. 5018 – AN ACT CONCERNING PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION REIMBURSEMENTS TO MUNICIPALITIES

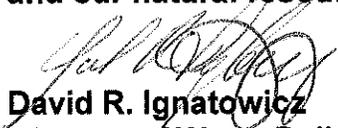
The Town of Vernon appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in support of Raised Bill No. 5018. As a community who historically has been in the forefront of efforts to improve the waters of the State of Connecticut, the Vernon wastewater treatment facility is expecting a proposed phosphorus limit of 0.14 milligrams per liter for its effluent discharge when its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit is renewed.

Increasing grant eligibility to municipalities for costs associated with phosphorus removal upgrades would tremendously help those 40 plus communities who will be required to make multi-million dollar investments in their infrastructure in order to meet U.S EPA and CT DEEP phosphorus discharge limits.

As an environmental professional, I can appreciate the benefit that reducing the nutrient loading can have on the Hockanum River. However, this benefit should be carefully weighed against what the towns can reasonably afford. Municipalities continue to struggle in this down economy and taxpayers are forced to make difficult decisions in their household budgets. All one has to do is spend a week at the revenue collector's office and watch people come in to make weekly payments on their sewer user bills. People are really struggling.

The Vernon wastewater treatment facility serves not only by the Town of Vernon, but also the Towns of Ellington, Tolland, Manchester and South Windsor. In the mid 1990's, upgrades to reduce the amount of ammonia nitrogen in the effluent discharge were made to the treatment plant totaling \$32,446,720 of which over \$27,600,000 was paid by local taxes. There is still three years to go to pay off that obligation. Additional wastewater treatment plant upgrades for nutrient reduction, primarily total nitrogen and phosphorus, plus upgrading an aging infrastructure, will once again require improvements costing millions of dollars.

The Town of Vernon has always been, and will continue to be good stewards of the environment. Any assistance to help lessen the financial burden on the local taxpayer will go a long way to help garner public support for upgrades necessary to keep our water clean and our natural resources viable.


David R. Ignatowicz
Director of Water Pollution Control
Town of Vernon