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Testimony by Walter J. Gancarz, P.E.  
Town Engineer, Cheshire  
State Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee  
Wednesday, February 19, 2014  
Legislative Office Building

Re: HB-5081 – An Act Concerning Phosphorous Reduction Reimbursement to Municipalities

Honorable Committee Members, good day and thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is Walter J. Gancarz, I am the Town Engineer for the Town of Cheshire, was formerly on the Cheshire Water Pollution Control Authority, and have been in environmental consulting as a Professional Engineer for the past 37 years. I am here to speak in support of provisions in HB- 5081 which increases the reimbursement for phosphorous reduction projects under the Clean Water Fund.

A key element in this legislation is the provision to increase the grant for phosphorous removal projects from 30% to 50%.

The Town of Cheshire is currently under construction for the upgrade to our Wastewater Treatment Plant at an estimated cost of \$32.150 million, the largest capital expense incurred in our Town's history. Imbedded in this appropriation is an estimated \$7.2 million to address the State's mandated phosphorous reduction strategy. Five years ago we were mandated by the State to reduce nitrogen, which we implemented at a cost of \$7 million. Consequently, Cheshire will have committed approximately \$14.2 million to meet two environmental state mandates, which will impose a significant debt burden on our financial operation and force us to defer other critically important infrastructure capital projects. While we understand the importance and benefit of these environmental initiatives, it does create an unfair financial burden on residents in the affected municipalities. In addition, there will be ongoing operation and maintenance costs to operate the nitrogen and phosphorous treatment systems, approaching \$250,000 per year, a cost that is totally the town's responsibility.

A key item that we believe should be considered in Cheshire's case is that we were among the first communities to have accepted this phosphorous limit in our NPDES permit, have begun construction of the system to treat this wastewater component, and will in fact be removing phosphorous from our wastewater effluent years before other communities reach this point. Yet, under the current bill, it is unlikely that we will be funded at the higher grant percent of