

Testimony to the Environment Committee

March 7, 2014

HB 5424 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WATER PLANNING COUNCIL

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA) is a non-profit, public corporation and political subdivision of the state. Our mission is to provide high quality water at a reasonable cost while promoting the preservation of watershed land and aquifers. We serve some 430,000 customers in the region. The source of this water is a system of watershed and aquifer areas that cover about 120 square miles within 24 municipalities. Much of our 27,000 acres of land is managed for watershed protection, timber resource conservation, wildlife habitat, open space, education, and research.

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, (RWA), appreciates the opportunity to provide comments to the Environment Committee **in support of the intent of Raised House Bill 5424 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WATER PLANNING COUNCIL.**

We commend the Environment Committee for taking on this very important topic and further promoting a **plan** for this vital resource. Overall, a state water plan is essential to meet the needs of the state to protect public health and the environment, to ensure safety and promote economic development.

Completion of the Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) process is a significant step and approval of their respective plans should be a priority. The WUCC regional water supply plans would provide a foundational piece for a state water plan by defining areas of public water supply needs and available solutions through cooperation and coordination between public water systems. We urge that the completion of these regional plans be expedited as a first step to ensure that the information gained can be integrated into the state water plan as specified in the Act. To clarify this intent, the language in Section 1 (a) (5) should read “regional” water utility coordinating committee plans rather than “individual” water utility coordinating committee plans.

Section 1(b) of the Act which lists the requirements for the state water plan should be modified to identify the protection of the quality, quantity, and availability of public water supplies to meet present and future needs as a specific objective of the plan.

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority

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A plan to restrict non-emergency use of water should include **all** stakeholders. Therefore, in Section 7 (c) (1), “**public water supplier or suppliers in the region**” should be included on the list of entities convened to develop a response plan to restrict non-emergency use of water when the Governor declares a drought emergency. Additionally, the bill should include language that facilitates interconnections to promote a flexible supply of water and where applicable support economic development efforts.

Your commitment to this very important issue is greatly appreciated. Thank you for considering the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority’s comments. If you have additional questions please contact, Lori Vitagliano, RWA Government Relations Specialist at 203-401-2720 or lvitagliano@rwater.com