

Testimony
Raymond E. Drew
Administrator, WPCA
City of Torrington
Before the Finance Committee
March 13, 2014

RE: SB-29, AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PURPOSES

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in regards to this very important matter.

As proposed, SB-29 includes level funding for the state's Clean Water Fund which provides grants and loans to municipalities to comply with state-mandated and federally-mandated water pollution control projects (including waste water treatment projects, nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) removal and resource restoration projects to protect the Long Island Sound) and drinking water projects.

Several towns in Connecticut are facing multi-million dollar wastewater treatment plant upgrades in order to comply with state and federal phosphorus reduction goals *intended to benefit the state as a whole*. Torrington is facing a \$51.3 million upgrade to its Wastewater Treatment Facility \$13.4 million of which is for phosphorus removal. This imposes a significant burden on certain communities whose plants discharge into non-tidal surface waters.

Recognizing this concern, the General Assembly adopted Public Act 13-239 which increases from 30% to 50% the amount certain towns are eligible to receive for phosphorus reduction projects under the Clean Water Fund grant program. However, the increased reimbursements are available only to the first three construction contracts entered into by municipalities before July 1, 2018. Given that phosphorus reduction is a one of Connecticut's top environmental priorities, the state should assist all of the affected municipalities in meeting state and federal standards instead of picking three winners.

In view of the costs associated with compliance with state and federal mandated phosphorus reduction standards, we urge lawmakers to (1) increase overall funding for the Clean Water Fund and (2) support legislation referred to this committee by the Environment Committee (HB-5081) to create a level playing field for all affected municipalities.

By increasing funding for the Clean Water Fund and providing a higher rate of reimbursement for additional phosphorus reduction projects, lawmakers will help ensure that certain towns are not shouldering the entire financial burden for meeting statewide environmental goals.

Again thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.