



CITY OF DANBURY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
155 DEER HILL AVENUE
DANBURY, CT 06810

(203) 797-4637
FAX (203) 796-1590

Testimony
David M. Day, P.E.
Public Utilities Superintendent, City of Danbury
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

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 phosphorus removal projects).

The City of Danbury is one of several municipalities impacted by new wastewater treatment plant phosphorus effluent discharge limits imposed by CT DEEP. One of the main issues of concern is burdening the sewer ratepayers with the expensive capital projects necessary to meet these new limits. Danbury has been working with other coalition towns with similar issues in an effort to understand the science behind DEEP mandating these stringent phosphorus removal limits and in establishing a fair time frame with DEEP to implement the WWTP capital upgrades necessary to meet these limits.

In order to meet DEEP phosphorus removal limits of 0.1 mg/l – to achieve 98% removal - \$30 million dollars in extensive capital improvements to the Danbury Wastewater Treatment Plant would be necessary. These required extensive capital improvement costs affect not only Danbury, but also the towns of Bethel, Brookfield, Newtown, and Ridgefield as Danbury accepts sewage generated and conveyed from these regional towns for treatment at our WWTP.

Legislative and financial support of HB-5081 (AN ACT CONCERNING PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION REIMBURSEMENTS TO MUNICIPALITIES) is much needed as it will:

- lessen the burden of the associated capital costs on the Danbury and Regional sewer ratepayers,
- help “level the playing field” for all municipalities competing for funds who have similar issues and needs,
- and help get the public support needed to approve the bond funding packages required to pay for this work.

Without increases in available Clean Water Fund grant funding it will be very difficult to acquire the voter support necessary to approve the bond packages necessary for this work. It is for this reason that we believe it is fair and necessary to allow any municipality, and not just the first three municipalities that enter into construction contracts, to be eligible for 50% grant funding for 0.2 mg/l or less phosphorus removal projects required to meet the permit limits imposed by CT DEEP.

Given that the proposed new language of HB-5081 states that any contract and not just the first three contracts entered into by a municipality is eligible for 50% grant funding there is no need for the last sentence of Section 1, Subsection (c) (6) of HB-5081 which as proposed states the following:

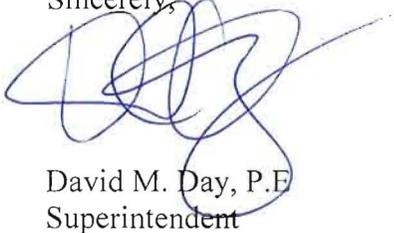
“In providing funding under this subdivision, the commissioner shall give priority, first to projects with the lowest permitted limit of phosphorus discharge as contained in a valid discharge permit issued pursuant to section 24a-430, and then to those that remove the greatest amount of phosphorus, as measured in pounds per year.”

Lastly, it is also very important to note that Danbury has not yet been issued a new valid discharge permit with new phosphorus removal limits as negotiations continue with DEEP on issuance of this permit. Danbury’s eligibility to receive grant funding for phosphorus removal projects should not be jeopardized based on the issuance date of our new discharge permit. Therefore any reference in HB-5081 to funding priority based on projects with a valid discharge permit should be deleted.

In closing and in view of the costs associated with compliance with state mandated phosphorus reduction standards, we urge lawmakers to (1) make the necessary changes to SB-29 to increase overall funding for the Clean Water Fund and (2) to support legislation referred to the Finance Committee by the Environment Committee (HB-5081), along with the recommended language deletions to HB-5081 as stated in our testimony, in order to more equitably fund phosphorus removal projects for all affected communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David M. Day", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David M. Day, P.E.
Superintendent

C: Mark D. Boughton, Mayor
Antonio Iadarola, P.E., Public Works Director