

**TESTIMONY BY THE TOWN OF GLASTONBURY  
GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
RAISED BILL 332 – AN ACT AMENDING THE CHARTER OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT  
IN HARTFORD COUNTY  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING  
FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2014**

Co-Chairs Osten and Rojas, Vice Chairs Cassano and Fox, Ranking Members Fasano and Aman and members of the Planning and Development Committee. Good afternoon. My name is Stewart Beckett and I am testifying today as Chairman of the Glastonbury Town Council on behalf of the Town of Glastonbury. The Town strongly supports Raised Bill 332.

Glastonbury, along with Farmington, South Windsor, East Granby and Portland, is a non-member town of the Metropolitan District Commission (the District). This means that Glastonbury residents and businesses receive drinking water from the District, but do not receive other services, such as sewer service. In addition, Glastonbury does not have representation in the District's governance. There are approximately 6,100 business and residential customers in Glastonbury who receive water service from the District.

When the District bills Glastonbury residents for water service, it includes charges for water use, a customer service charge, a general surcharge and a special Capital surcharge. Over recent years, the general surcharge for non-member customers has increased significantly, from \$52.68 per year in 2011 to \$423 in 2013. This general surcharge, which is often referred to as a non-member surcharge, is not charged to customers in member towns.

Glastonbury, like other non-member towns, understands that the District is required by law to assess charges for water service uniformly among member and non-member towns. When the Town complained to the District that Glastonbury was being assessed this additional surcharge, the District indicated that the non-member surcharge is intended to recover capital charges incurred by the District between 1929 and 1966. The District also indicated that the surcharge was established in an effort to avoid a negative credit rating. The fact that the District may be experiencing financial difficulties does not justify the imposition only in non-member towns of additional charges for costs incurred decades ago. Accordingly, in our opinion, the District is unfairly charging non-member towns a general surcharge not applicable to member towns.

The proposed legislation makes it clear that water rates must be charged equally to all water customers. Importantly, water rates are defined to include all water use charges, customer service charges and general surcharges. Essentially, the legislation confirms that member and non-member towns will be charged uniformly for water service.

Furthermore, in response to Glastonbury's concern about the lack of uniformity in water usage fees, the District cited costs for sanitary sewer services. Comparing water rates by referencing sewer charges is not appropriate, however, because non-member towns like Glastonbury do not receive any sewer services from the District. Accordingly, a uniform charge for water service to customers in member and non-member towns should only include the cost of water service, not sewer charges.

Finally, the legislation will give Glastonbury a voice in District decisions impacting the Town. As a non-member town, Glastonbury currently does not have representation on the District Board of Commissioners. At the same time, actions by the District Commission influence charges, policies, protocols, and other matters involving customers in non-member town. The proposed legislation enables each non-member town to appoint a representative to the District Board. That representative will be able to vote on any issue that

directly affects his or her community. This is vitally important for matters affecting residents and businesses in non-member communities.

As a non-member community, Glastonbury strongly supports Raised Bill 332 and respectfully requests your favorable action. Again, my thanks for your time this afternoon and considering these formal comments of the Town of Glastonbury and Glastonbury Town Council.