



**ELIZABETH GARA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CONNECTICUT WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
MARCH 6, 2015**

RE: HB-6824, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE.

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA), which represents, municipal, private and regional water companies, appreciates the opportunity to comment on **HB-6824**, the Governor's proposed budget, as it relates to the state Department of Public Health.

Last year, the Connecticut General Assembly adopted Public Act 14-163, which directs the Water Planning Council to develop a state water plan. A state water plan is a critical step in ensuring that Connecticut has sufficient public water supplies to meet the state's current and future public health, safety and economic development needs while providing for other water resources needs, including agriculture, recreation, fisheries, and other environmental needs.

As part of these efforts, the legislature also adopted Public Act 14-98, which includes provisions establishing the Public Water System Improvement program to provide grants-in-aid, in the form of loan principal forgiveness, to certain municipal, regional and not-for-profit public water systems for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) projects. This program is critical to assisting water companies in moving forward with water infrastructure projects that are needed to replace aging pipes, improve and expand distribution systems, implement water conservation measures and upgrade treatment plants to comply with rigorous state and federal water quality standards.

According to EPA's 2011 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey, which evaluates the drinking water infrastructure capital improvement needs of the country and each state, Connecticut's water infrastructure needs have increased significantly. Connecticut's estimated need has grown from \$1.394 billion in 2007 to \$3.587 billion in 2011, including 1) \$2.584 billion for Transmission and Distribution; 2) \$545.1 million for Treatment; 3) \$267.3 million for storage; 4) \$146.6 million for water sources; and 4) \$35 million for other infrastructure needs.

This Public Water System Improvement program created last year is administered by the state Department of Public Health, which has primacy over issues regarding water quality and compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Although the legislature authorized one-time bond funding of \$50 million for this program, these funds have not yet been appropriated by the Bond Commission. Moreover, the state Department of Public Health's request for additional bond funding for FY 16 and FY 17 has not been incorporated in Governor Malloy's proposed budget.

CWWA requests that lawmakers consider how to assist water companies in moving forward with needed infrastructure projects as they deliberate the budget.

Thank you for your consideration.