

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
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Testimony to the Finance Committee

March 9, 2015

SB-946, AN ACT CONCERNING REVENUE ITEMS TO IMPLEMENT THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

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 our customers with high quality water at a reasonable cost while promoting the preservation of watershed land and aquifers. We provide approximately 46 million gallons of water per day to some 430,000 consumers in 15 communities in our 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 RWA **opposes** Section 29 of **SB-946**, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE REVENUE ITEMS IN THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET.

Section 29 sweeps revenues from the Community Investment Account (CIA), which funds the Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition grant program to assist water companies and other entities in purchasing and preserving open space and watershed lands. The CIA, which is funded through a \$40 land recording fee collected by municipalities, also funds affordable housing, farmland preservation, and historic preservation programs.

The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant program enables the protection of lands critical for protecting the quality of public drinking water sources. The RWA has been involved in the protection of over 1,200 acres in the water district that were leveraged with the help of State open space grant funding. Other land conservation organizations within our district have benefited from these grants as well. Many of these transactions would not have occurred without the State grants. In addition to moving the State closer to its open space goals and protecting these properties from development, this program has enabled protection of lands critical for providing high-quality public drinking water to the citizens of Connecticut while lessening impacts to water rate payers.

Thank you for considering the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority's comments. For more information, please contact John Triana, Real Estate Manager at, 203-401-2749 or jtriana1@rwater.com