



# Town of Easton

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February 4, 2015

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Dear members of the Housing Committee:

Thank you for holding this hearing.

The Town of Easton contains all or parts of four reservoirs. Over 90% of its land is public drinking water supply watershed—what the state calls Source Protection Areas and categorizes as Class AA watersheds. Much of the rain that falls on the woodlands and fields of Easton pours out of the faucets of Bridgeport and other urban centers.

Easton has recognized the role it plays in supplying clean drinking water to our region for decades. That, in part, is why in 1941 Easton established its watershed-protective zoning regulations, requiring three acres for building lots in the region generally corresponding to watershed lands.

The State of Connecticut also places profound importance on the purity of our drinking water. It has established the Source Protection and Assessment Unit, an entire department devoted to maintaining the purity of Connecticut's water. Connecticut General Statutes 25-33, 25-32, 22a-417, 25-34a, 25-32g, 25-51, 25-43, 25-41, 22a-430b, 22a-354a, 8-3i, 8-2, and 8-33 exist in whole or in part to protect the public drinking supply watershed. In the ongoing storm water permit revision (MS4), the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection initially proposed towns expend Herculean efforts to keep water clean.

Sadly, our tools to protect this important public interest can be brushed aside by a developer seeking advantage under the 8-30g statute. The irony is that developers often use the threat of 8-30g to break local zoning regulations. When this happens, no public interest is served.

The state should have a consistent set of policies to guard our water THROUGHOUT its body of law, and not force towns to navigate a haze of conflicting directives and statutes, often finding themselves at odds with developers who, despite their represented concern for affordability, assemble legal teams unaffordable to most towns.

Modest changes to the 8-30g statute would result in major improvements to the protection of Connecticut's drinking water. I urge you to modify the current statute to specifically allow local zoning boards to take into consideration whether a proposed development is in a state designated Public Drinking Water Source Protection Area and to specifically designate the purity of the public drinking water as a substantial public interest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Adam Dunsby, First Selectman