



**Testimony**  
**Elizabeth Gara**  
**Connecticut Water Works Association (CWVA)**  
**Before the**  
**Public Safety Committee**  
**February 19, 2015**

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWVA) has the following concerns regarding **HB-6777, AN ACT REQUIRING THE INSTALLATION OF AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.**

As purveyors of public water supplies to protect the public health and safety of Connecticut residents, we certainly support the intent of the bill to protect residents and property from injury or damage caused by fire.

As part of our responsibility to ensure that public water supply systems are protected from contamination issues, however, we believe the bill should be amended to reference regulations in the Public Health Code designed to protect public water supplies from contamination issues arising from cross connections.

Fire Sprinkler systems are a concern in this regard because the pressure and volume demands in a fire emergency can draw non-potable water into the public water supply system. Reduced pressure principle backflow preventers (RPD) protection is required on a line to any fire sprinkler system if chemicals are added. A Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA) is required on a fire sprinkler system with a Siamese connection.

The regulations also require “Any person engaged in the installation or modification of an automatic fire extinguishing system in any building served by a public water system, as defined in subsection (a) of section 25-33d of the General Statutes, shall notify that public water system of such installation. Such persons shall be subject to all applicable rules of such public water system.” In addition to these regulations, fire sprinkler systems in new construction are regulated by both the State Fire Safety Code and the State Building Code.

We believe it is also important to point out that when a law was adopted requiring the installation of fire extinguishing systems in nursing homes, some nursing homes faced significant unexpected costs due to the need to install water main extensions or larger water main connections in certain areas or underground water tank reservoirs to ensure that there was sufficient water to meet both fire protection and public health needs.

*The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWVA) is an association of public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut. Membership in the Association is open to all Connecticut water utilities: investor-owned, municipal and regional authorities. CWVA is committed to working with the state to develop policies that will ensure that Connecticut has a safe, ample supply of water to meet present and future needs.*