



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing – February 13, 2015
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Robert J. Klee

House Bill No. 5291– AAC REIMBURSEMENT FOR MUNICIPAL PHOSPHORUS ABATEMENT PROJECTS

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding **House Bill No. 5291 – AAC REIMBURSEMENT FOR MUNICIPAL PHOSPHORUS ABATEMENT PROJECTS (Committee Bill)**. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element that is essential to support plant growth. When present in excessive amounts, phosphorus contributes to a process called “eutrophication” that can impair both aquatic life and recreational use of Connecticut’s water resources.

Section 1 of the bill proposes increased funding for municipal water pollution control projects related to phosphorus reduction. Public Act 13-239 previously increased grant funding from 30% of the phosphorus related costs to 50% for up to three projects that enter into construction contracts prior to July 1, 2018. Subsequently, Public Act 14-13 further provided funding for any project that enters into a construction contract by July 1, 2018 and removes phosphorus to at or below two-tenths milligrams per liter effluent discharge. An additional two communities qualified for funding under Public Act 14-13.

DEEP notes that the current State of Connecticut Clean Water Funding grant percentages are exceptionally generous and exceeds funding provided by the other New England States.

It is important to note by increasing grant funding for one type of project another Clean Water Fund project may not get funded. Eventually increased grant funding will increase the State's overall costs for the Clean Water Fund. This bill would provide increased grant funding to additional communities at an estimated cost of tens of millions of dollars.

Section 2 of the proposal requires an additional report to be submitted to the legislature which is duplicative with the report which will be prepared pursuant to Public Act 12-155. Consistent with Public Act 12-155, DEEP has been working cooperatively with affected communities regarding phosphorus implementation and scientific methodologies.

Lastly, Section 3 and 4 of the bill requires DEEP to conduct a one year study of water quality effects of interim phosphorus reduction levels in the Quinnipiac River. The DEEP does not have available staff resources for sampling to undertake this study nor to contract with the US Geological Survey to participate in any such study. However, DEEP is committed to continuing our existing monitoring and will make adjustments to such monitoring based on the results of the Public Act 12-155 collaboration and within available resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Robert LaFrance, DEEP's Director of Governmental Affairs, at 860.424.3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov (or, Elizabeth McAuliffe, DEEP Legislative Liaison, at 860.424.3458 or Elizabeth.McAuliffe@ct.gov).