



State of Connecticut

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**Testimony for HB5291
Environment Committee
Friday, February 13, 2015**

Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, Senator Chapin, Representative Shaban and members of the Environment Committee. I am offering testimony in favor of **H.B. No. 5291: AN ACT CONCERNING REIMBURSEMENT FOR MUNICIPAL PHOSPHORUS ABATEMENT PROJECTS.**

I first want to thank you for holding a public hearing on this important bill today. I believe House Bill 5291 addresses a very serious issue for any municipality in Connecticut who has a wastewater treatment facility mandated to reduce phosphorus level discharge. As we all know, municipalities face tough budget decisions each year and when a new mandate is passed along they struggle to absorb the new costs along with maintaining their current services. When new phosphorus mandates were passed down to municipalities they included very little in the way of resources to make upgrades realistic without being a major burden to the residents they serve. While we have set up increased assistance to help municipalities in previous years, unfortunately this was not done in a uniform manner leaving a split between towns who would receive additional assistance and towns who would not.

Under this proposal, it would establish uniform assistance for municipalities like Wallingford in my district who have been denied the 50% funding for upgrades to their wastewater treatment plant to reduce phosphorus discharges. The bill achieves uniform assistance by eliminating the restriction that a project is only eligible if the community can begin construction by July 2018 and eliminating the restriction that a project is only eligible if it is designed to bring phosphorus levels down to 0.2 milligrams/liter or less. These restrictions punish towns which may not be required to start construction under their permit before July 2018 or towns which have been issued permits with different phosphorous levels making them ineligible for assistance regardless if they have to spend a considerable amount of money to meet mandated levels.

House Bill 5291 is a way we can reasonably support all of our towns who must reduce their phosphorous discharge from wastewater treatment plants. There is no reason we should be treating one municipal plant different from another when they are being asked to achieve the same goal. I look forward to working with the leadership of the committee this session to provide equal assistance standards to all wastewater plants required to reduce their phosphorous levels. I thank you for your consideration.

Len Fasano

Senate Minority Leader