

Town of Durham

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

LAURA L. FRANCIS



Testimony
Before the
Environment Committee
February 13, 2015

Re: SB-865 - AN ACT CONCERNING ALLOWABLE COSTS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF OVERSIZED WATER MAINS AND THE BACKUP WELL SITING REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN WATER COMPANY DIVERSIONS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the provisions in SB-865 which will assist towns in addressing public water supply concerns in areas impacted by contamination.

SB-865 amends Section 22a-471 of the general statutes to address concerns that the existing funding formula undermines the ability of towns to address the potable drinking water needs of their community where groundwater pollution has created an unreasonable risk for health or safety.

Under the existing funding formula, reimbursement is limited to the installation of smaller-sized pipes to meet the potable water needs of those residents affected by the groundwater pollution even though these affected areas may increase over time or towns need to address other needs, such as fire protection. Unfortunately, towns that need additional capacity and are interested in installing a larger sized pipe to provide water supplies for firefighting and/or economic development projects are penalized under the existing formula.

In certain instances, installing a larger size water main makes a lot of sense. For example, to ensure sufficient water supplies for fire protection or other legitimate long-term needs of the region. In situations like this, water companies are often willing to fund the incremental cost associated with the increased water main but towns like Durham will receive less funding under the 471 program because of the formula.

This penalty should be removed to ensure that a community like Durham, which is struggling to address the public water supply needs of its residents, can install an appropriately sized water main without losing funding that it would otherwise be eligible to receive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura L. Francis".

Laura L. Francis
First Selectman