

**South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority**  
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## Testimony to the Environment Committee

February 13, 2015

### **SB-865 - INSTALLATION OF OVERSIZED WATER MAINS & BACKUP WELL SITING**

*The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA) is a non-profit, public corporation and political subdivision of the state. Our mission is to provide our customers with high quality water at a reasonable cost while promoting the preservation of watershed land and aquifers. We provide approximately 46 million gallons of water per day to some 430,000 consumers in 15 communities in our region. The source of this water is a system of watershed and aquifer areas that cover about 120 square miles within 24 municipalities. Much of our 27,000 acres of land is managed for watershed protection, timber resource conservation, wildlife habitat, open space, education, and research.*

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments to the Environment Committee in **Support** of **Raised Bill 865 - INSTALLATION OF OVERSIZED WATER MAINS & BACKUP WELL SITING**.

The RWA supports Raised Bill 865 with a specific focus on Section 2 of the bill which would modify an exemption from diversion permitting concerning the installation of backup wells by a water company. The proposed modification to increase the allowable distance for installing backup wells to 750 feet from a primary well will assist water companies in their role of ensuring the protection of public health and safety, and will promote more efficient water system operations.

Under the current exemption, a water company can divert water from a backup well only if it is installed within 250 feet of a primary well. This can significantly limit the ability of water companies to site a new backup well in the best location to ensure optimal performance. For example, the need for a backup well can be the result of bacterial biofouling of an existing well. Biofouling results in slimes and encrustations on well screens and equipment that reduce well capacity, damage pumping systems, and cause water quality problems such as manganese, odors, and discoloration. In addition to poor water quality, the resulting loss of well capacity and/or equipment damage can negatively impact a water company's readiness to meet peak demands from summer usage or firefighting. The presence and growth of biofouling bacteria can be associated with localized influences in the aquifer surrounding a well. With the cost of a new well often approaching one million dollars, it is important that water companies be given a reasonable degree of flexibility to site new back-up well locations in areas that will ensure the best water quality and long-term reliability.

Thank you for considering the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority's comments. For more information, please contact John Hudak, Environmental Planning Manager at, 203-401-2733 or [jhudak@rwater.com](mailto:jhudak@rwater.com)