



FOR THE ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY OF RIVERS ALLIANCE OF CONNECTICUT
Litchfield, CT rivers@riversalliance.org**

MARCH 17, 2015

**To the Chairmen: Sen. Paul Doyle and Rep. Lonnie Reed
And to Members of the Committee**

HB6993 AAC WATER SYSTEMS

Support.

Rivers Alliance of Connecticut is the statewide, non-profit coalition of river organizations, individuals, and businesses formed to protect and enhance Connecticut's waters by promoting sound water policies, uniting and strengthening the state's many river groups, and educating the public about the importance of water stewardship.

We welcome the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, and apologize for being unable to deliver it in person.

The Water Planning Council, of which PURA is the lead member (Chairman), is presently beginning to prepare for comprehensive, statewide water planning pursuant to PA 14-163. In addition to PURA, the Council includes DEEP, DPH, and OPM.

I believe that PURA would be the right agency to lead a study of water systems at this time. Its responsibilities re planning are somewhat undefined, and this bill would makes its role clearer. Until now, PURA's authority has been largely restricted to private water companies and their water systems. Over time, Connecticut has developed, without much public discussion, a regulated, monopolistic industry for privately owned water utilities alongside an unregulated, monopolistic industry for publicly owned water utilities. Customers don't get much of a choice or say.

The Energy and Technology Committee has been in the past sensitive to the confusions in the supply picture; in fact, it was a series of E&T industry studies about 2000 that led to the creation of the Water Planning Council.

If the Council was further along in its planning, Rivers Alliance might view this bill as interference. But at this point, I see it as creating better balance as the planning begins. If this bill is not deemed helpful, I hope the Committee will help guide the planning in a good direction by some other means.

I am a member and co-chair of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group, but I have not discussed this testimony with anyone in the group, nor would I expect wide agreement or maybe even not narrow agreement.

Thanks for your attention.

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Executive Director

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