



Testimony
Elizabeth Gara
Connecticut Water Works Association
Before the Appropriations Committee
February 10, 2016

RE: H.B. No. 5044 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA), a trade association of municipal, private and regional water utilities, respectfully submits the following comments relative to the Governor's proposed budget.

As stewards of the state's water resources, Connecticut's water utilities vigorously support efforts to protect open space and watershed lands, implement forest management programs, inspect dams, assist communities in addressing contaminated water issues, address concerns regarding invasive plants and species, implement clean water programs and other activities. These activities assist water utilities in providing our customers with a safe supply of public water of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the state's public health, safety and economic development needs.

In addition, water utilities are heavily regulated and rely on permits and other regulatory approvals to operate. Delays in permit processing impede efforts to develop new sources of supply, upgrade treatment and distribution systems and perform other activities needed to operate efficiently to meet customer needs and ensure quality water supplies.

As such, CWWA is concerned about the impact of proposed cuts on the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) that will result in staffing reductions and/or cuts to various programs that are vital to the protection of the state's water resources.

CWWA is also concerned that the move from line item appropriations to agency block grant funding may result in cuts to programs that are critical to the protection of the state's water resources. By giving state agency officials broad authority to make cuts to specific programs, the regulated community will have little if any opportunity to provide input on how such cuts will affect programs and personnel that are critical to their operations.

Recognizing the state's difficult fiscal challenges, CWWA stands ready to work with the administration and lawmakers in looking for ways to streamline agency operations and reduce costs without jeopardizing programs that are essential to water resources management.