



**Testimony**  
**Elizabeth Gara, Executive Director**  
**Connecticut Water Works Association**  
**Before the**  
**Environment Committee**  
**February 19, 2016**

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA), a trade association of municipal, regional and private water utilities.

CWWA appreciates the opportunity to comment on **SJ – 5 - RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION CONCERNING THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE STATE.**

The resolution has been proposed as a means to limit changes in use or disposition of state owned lands or easements that are held for conservation purposes and calls for a constitutional amendment requiring the legislature to approve such actions by a two thirds majority vote. A constitutional amendment is a significant step and, as such, the language must be carefully crafted and sufficiently clear to ensure that voters fully understand the referendum question.

We can appreciate the interest in providing greater protections for parcels of land that have significance for open space or conservation purposes, but are concerned that the preamble and other language in the resolution is overly broad, inviting confusion as to its intended scope and purpose. Since the proposal's intent is to address legislative approval for certain land conveyances, the language should be narrowed accordingly to avoid confusion or unintended consequences.

Testimony submitted by environmental organizations and others have suggested a number of amendments to the proposed resolution to clarify which lands would be subject to the process, to provide a mechanism for reasonable exceptions, and to add a requirement for a public hearing in the town(s) where the land is located. While these seem like reasonable modifications, we respectfully request that CWWA be included in any discussions regarding the scope of the resolution and details of the process as it moves forward in the legislature.

Thank you.