



AQUARION
Water Company

Stewards of the Environment

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Testimony for the
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Aquarion Water Company
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Connecticut's independent institutions of higher education are now being challenged as never before by the need to quickly and effectively respond to the needs of our state's business community.

State regulations for program review make for an exceedingly long and cumbersome process that independent colleges and universities must take to develop innovative courses reflecting the fast-breaking needs of companies of all types across the state.

That is why I am writing to urge you to support SB 24, AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAM APPROVAL FOR INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION. Under this far-sighted proposal, independent institutions of higher education in Connecticut that meet specific qualifications standards would be freed from the Office of Higher Education's lengthy academic program approval process.

Aquarion has a 157-year track record and today serves nearly 650,000 homes and business across the state on a daily basis. To continue ensuring our customers of a reliable supply of safe, high quality water, we will need to draw from a pool of top talent in fields as diverse as engineering, finance, environmental science, human relations and others.

These recruits need to be up-to-the-minute on the latest tools and technologies to address the multitude of challenges that the future will bring. We depend on colleges and universities across the state to prepare students for those challenges and the jobs we will have to offer. If those institutions are hamstrung by excessive regulations governing program innovation, not only will Aquarion lose but so will hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents and businesses.

It is time for Connecticut to join the 43 other states that make it easier for independent institutions of higher education to keep pace with the changing needs of business. Please take this important step to help Connecticut colleges and universities take the role they need to take in bringing new jobs and a stronger economy to our state by supporting SB 24.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Charles V. Firlotte, President and CEO