

Carolyn K. Sorkin, Ph.D.
373 Auburn Rd.
West Hartford CT 06119

For Legislative Hearing Friday, March 11, 2016

Bill name: An Act Concerning Residential Water Rates, Public Drinking Water Supply Emergencies, and the Sellers of Bottled Water

Re: Support for Substitute SB 422

Dear Planning and Development Committee members:

I am writing in regard to the Act Concerning Residential Water Rates, Public Drinking Water Supply Emergencies, and the Sellers of Bottled Water, and specifically in support of Substitute SB 422. I believe the bill as raised in committee requires revision. As a concerned citizen of West Hartford, I would support the raised bill with substitute language dealing with the following points:

- Water rate discounts for water bottlers must be rescinded. Private companies otherwise will take advantage of public municipal and spring water, pollute the environment with plastic bottles that end up in landfills, and profit at the expense of the taxpayer. In such a situation, citizens wind up paying higher prices even as we are asked to conserve water, while private companies profit.
- The bill needs to protect residents, not water bottlers, especially in the event of a drought. Frankly, if public water supplies are safe (and the recent problems with drinking water in Flint, MI reminds us that it is a core responsibility of our government to ensure such), there is much less need for bottled water in the first place.
- The Special Sewer Service Charge discount for water bottlers (aka the Clean Water Project Charge) must be rescinded. There is no reason to give corporations a discount. I note as well that local taxpayers have spent years supporting clean-water infrastructure, and should be the beneficiaries thereof.
- I urge you to impose a moratorium on any new large-capacity agreements of this sort, both because it is dangerous for water bottling companies to divert water from watershed areas, and because it's important that the State Water Plan be completed.
- In light of recent events, I believe there is good reason for a citizens' Watchdog committee for the Metropolitan District Commission to be re-established.

In advance, I thank you for your attention to this crucial matter.

Sincerely,
Carolyn K. Sorkin