

Senator Osten, Representative Miller & Members of the Planning & Development Committee:

I write as a member of West Hartford's Town Council. Like many West Hartford residents, I first became aware of the Niagara Bottling company's intentions to build a water bottling plant in Bloomfield, CT after "the deal was already done." On its face, the optics of Niagara's arrangement with the MDC gives the strong impression that it is manifestly unfair to residents – i.e., Niagara is enabled to purchase large volumes of a commodity (water) at a substantial discount and then turn around and sell that very commodity (understanding with some treatment) at a premium – all the while using MDC's infrastructure which has been, and continues to be, financed by residents.

I believe that the public – and in particular those residents outside of Bloomfield – were deprived of the opportunity for meaningful discussion or deliberation with respect to this deal. To avoid such a scenario in the future, I would urge this Commission to address the notice provisions governing the MDC's resolution process. I would ask that the MDC be obliged to provide direct notice – by way of letter or similar correspondence – to member municipalities' Town Managers and Town Councils (or equivalent governing body) of proposals to provide rate discounts to certain groups of consumers. Notice through publication in a local newspaper is no longer an effective means of providing notice to a public that increasingly obtains its news electronically. Direct notice to local governing bodies is a cost-effective means of increasing local oversight and should provide the public with a greater ability to respond to the MDC measures which it may oppose.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Williams

West Hartford Town Council