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**IN RE: SB422 LCO 2591                      Planning & Development                      MARCH 11, 2016**  
**AN ACT CONCERNING RESIDENTIAL WATER RATES, PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLY**  
**EMERGENCIES AND SELLERS OF BOTTLED WATER.**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

My name is Keith R. Ainsworth, Esq. I reside at 31 Green Springs Drive, Madison, Connecticut and an environmental attorney with a New Haven office. I have been in private practice for 25 years and I have been a member of the Executive Committee and past-chair of the Environmental Law section of the CT Bar Association. I often represent individuals, businesses and organizations asserting claims to protect and conserve natural resources. I frequently lecture on environmental law. I am testifying in my capacity as a private citizen knowledgeable in environmental law, but I am also an attorney for BloomfieldCitizens.

I **SUPPORT** the bill now before your Committee which gives Connecticut residents priority access to clean drinking water.

**1. Currently, water suppliers can choose to supply water to commercial and industrial consumers of water preferentially over private households during times of drought when conservation restrictions are in place.**

This bill would rebalance the emphasis onto residential water consumers over those profiting from water resources – resources that are unequivocally public in nature.

**2. This bill proposes that water suppliers should charge all consumers of bottled water the same rates as other consumers.** Currently, water suppliers are free to commoditize Connecticut's water to the detriment of the watersheds from which the water is drawn. By setting water supply rates lower for high volume bottled water users, a water supplier incentivizes high volume use that transports water out of the watershed from which it is drawn. A bottled water company does not have to follow requirements for an inter-basin transfer permit placed on any other entity which draws more than 50,000 gallons/day. **This loophole is a leak in our watershed protection law.**

This bill's section 2 would provide an incentive to conserve CT water in Connecticut.

**3. Section 3 promotes water recycling and conservation by preventing high volume sewer users from getting a discount for high volumes of waste water.**

Ultimately, this bill promotes water conservation and removes regressive water pricing currently allowed. If one agrees that water is a public resource and that the resource is valuable for the health of ecosystems (river habitats) and human health, then any rational system of regulation of the use of that resource should prevent suppliers from giving a financial incentive (a reduced water or sewer rate) to use more water.

This bill allows a fair market rate to provide all users with an incentive to use less water. While Connecticut currently is considered a water rich state, we have seen too many examples of river systems being bled dry because we have assumed that water is infinitely available.

The Committee should pass this bill for these reasons.