



TO: Sen. Cathy Osten and Rep. Phil Miller, Chairmen,  
And Honorary Members of the Planning & Development Committee

Testimony from Rivers Alliance of Connecticut  
Public Hearing, March 11, 2016, on

Proposed Substitute Bill 422, LCO 2975 AAC Residential Water Rates,  
Public Drinking Water Supply Emergencies, and Sellers of Bottled Water. **Support**

*Rivers Alliance of Connecticut is a statewide non-profit organization, founded in 1992, as a coalition of river organizations, other conservation non-profits, individuals, and businesses working to protect and enhance Connecticut's rivers, streams, aquifers, lakes, and estuaries. We promote sound water policies and water stewardship through education and assistance at the local, regional, and state levels.*

Re Section 1, we support the protection of residents in times of water-supply emergencies. In almost all foreseeable circumstances, residents should have priority over commercial water bottlers. At this time, Connecticut has differing methods of defining and responding to emergency water shortages, and proposed changes are also being drafted by water experts. So the process is somewhat muddled. One factor does stand out: Connecticut droughts tend to be regional. Perhaps Sec. 1 of this bill could include regional or system-wide water-supply emergencies. Also, CGS Sec. 25-32b, under which DPH would declare a drinking water supply emergency may be somewhat out of date. Perhaps DPH might propose a different statutory base for its authority during a water emergency.

The policies and laws relating to water and wastewater pricing are complicated in this state, partly because we have three different types of water systems (private, municipal, and regional). Each arrives at pricing decisions in different ways. Sections 2 and 3, which relate to pricing, are narrowly written, which is helpful. Pricing policies certainly will be taken up in the comprehensive statewide water plan that the Water Planning Council is developing pursuant to PA 14-163. That does not mean that all pricing advice and decisions need to wait until completion of the plan (set for January 2018). Discount pricing for large-volume customers is the exact opposite of water-conservation pricing; and it is not necessary. Many utilities in the state are finding ways to integrate conservation pricing with economic viability.

Thanks you for addressing these matters. We would be happy to assist in any way that we can.

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