

Mary Fleischli
28 Brunswick Ave
West Hartford, CT 06107
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To: Planning and Development Committee,

I am writing in support of Substitute SB 422: An Act Concerning Residential Water Rates, Public Drinking Water Supply Emergencies and the Sellers of Bottled Water.

The current version of the bill requires the **same rates for residents and large commercial water bottling exporters and prioritizes residents in the event of a drought**. These provisions are quite reasonable.

I am deeply troubled by the MDC's new rate structure for Niagara. Residents have paid for numerous improvements to the MDC's infrastructure over the years. Why should a new customer, like Niagara, get a discount and pay less than the loyal existing customers?

Also, as an environmentalist, I am shocked that we would allow the MDC to discount the cost of water for a bottler. This rate structure could make it cheaper for me to buy bottled water sourced from the MDC than for me to drink tap water. The rate structure is encouraging the purchasing of bottled water. Many of the bottles will end up in landfills, causing disposal costs to our towns.

The MDC's actions are short sighted, focused on raising current revenue. If there is ever a drought, we need to ensure that residents are prioritized before large water exporters.

Additionally, I would like to see the bill strengthened in two ways:

I am very concerned that MDC made these decisions without citizen input. The MDC had a rate hearing but it was not well publicized. It was also not made public that they were lowering rates to encourage a water bottler to buy MDC water. The MDC needs to be transparent and there needs to be real citizen input into their decisions in the future. I would like to see a **citizen watchdog committee** created to ensure the MDC is focused on the best interests of citizens.

The town of Bloomfield encouraged Niagara to build a plant in their town with tax abatements. Bloomfield intentionally did not publicize their actions to residents or other towns. The extraction of MDC water affects all MDC member towns. The bill needs to be strengthened to **ensure that one town cannot make a decision that affects a shared resource without the other towns being consulted**.

Please vote for this bill and strengthen it if at all possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Fleischli