

Sharon J. Mann
1 Adams Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Public Hearing Friday March 11, 2016

Support for Substitute S.B. 422
(An Act Concerning Residential Water Rates, Public Drinking Water Supply Emergencies and the Sellers of Bottled Water)

Dear Senator Cathy Osten, Representative Phillip Miller and Planning and Development Committee Members:

As we watch the news and read, we are seeing that the world is drying up. Droughts can have major impact on agriculture, recreation and tourism, water supply, energy production, and transportation. As the climate heats up, droughts are expected to become more frequent and severe in some locations.

So what is drought? " A **drought** is a period of below-average precipitation in a given region, resulting in prolonged shortages of its waters supply, whether atmospheric, surface or ground water. A drought can last for months or years, or may be declared after as few as 15 days. It can have a substantial impact on the ecosystem and agriculture of the affected region. Although droughts can persist for several years, even a short, intense drought can cause significant damage and harm to the local economy. Periods of heat can significantly worsen drought conditions by hastening evaporation of water vapor"

The winter of 2016 in CT saw very little snow cover, March 9th set a record for being 81 degrees at Bradley International Airport 9 degrees higher than the record set 16 years ago in 1972. The normal high temperatures for March is 45 degrees. A hotter than usual summer is predicted. With climate warming on the rise, shouldn't we be concerned to what is happening to our water here in Connecticut? Should we be relying on outdated MDC's findings from the last century to determine our water resources for 2016 and beyond?

In Connecticut, we have conserved and respected our water resources, some of the best in the country and now MDC and the Town of Bloomfield want to give this water away. Putting some of that water back into our rivers would certainly be more beneficial than allowing an extractive company to transport 1.8 million gallons of water out of the state 7 days a week 365 days a year.

Bottled water is one of capitalism's greatest mysteries: the packaging and selling of something that is already freely available. It takes an average of 3 liters of water to produce 1 liter of bottled water. Based on 2011 US consumption rates, this amounts to a wastage of 100 billion liters a year. (*Sander Van der Linden; Yale Project on Climate Change Communication, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.*) This is happening at a time when scarcity of fresh water is becoming a rapidly increasing concern, currently affecting every continent in the world and likely to be exacerbated by climate change.

In 2011, it took more than 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide to produce the amount of bottled water required for US consumption – as energy is needed for packaging, transportation, and refrigeration. How do you justify 200 trucks a day polluting the air, wearing out the roads, possibly causing risk to a nearby school and neighborhoods.

Niagara Bottling has chosen to come to our state after being rebuked in other states. Why? Because MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) has offered our water to this California based company and Bloomfield town officials gave them a 4.9 million dollar tax abatement. All this without bringing it to public notice and input. They neglected to inform or even ask the opinion of their own Conservation & Energy Committee, because Niagara asked to keep the negotiations quiet. (this information revealed from FOIA documents from the Town of Bloomfield) and research has shown that this company has a track record of litigation against municipalities that have asked them in times of drought to slow down their production. The other disturbing thought is that if 2.8 million plastic bottles are being produced every day 7 days a week, how many are recycled? Reports indicate only 25%. We seem to be thinking short term for a minimal economic benefits and not long term for what the impact of loss of water would do to our state, our farms, our citizens, and future generations.

The sweetheart deal that Niagara made with the MDC to bottle millions of gallons of Connecticut water and truck them out of Connecticut poses a threat to all of the state's water supply.

With that in mind, I ask that you consider passage of the bill SB 422. Personally I don't think these bills go far enough. I urge you to carefully evaluate SB 422 with wording that will protect our water in times of drought, regulate our spring water, (which Niagara plans to use), rescind water rate discounts for water bottlers, rescind the Clean Water Project Charge. and reestablish a citizen MDC watch dog committee.

And most importantly: **IMPOSE A MORATORIUM ON ANY NEW LARGE WATER CAPACITY AGREEMENTS UNTIL THE STATE WATER PLAN IS COMPLETED AND ADDRESSES THIS ISSUE.**

Thank you.