



Farmington River Watershed Association, Inc.

749 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070

(860) 658-4442 Fax (860) 651-7519 www.frwa.org

March 7, 2016

**Testimony from the Farmington River Watershed Association
Opposing Bill 300, AAC New Britain Water Company Land**

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative, Ritter, and Members of the Public Health Committee,

The Farmington River Watershed Association is a private, non-profit citizens group dedicated to preserving, protecting, and restoring the Farmington River and its watershed through research, stewardship, education, and advocacy.

One of our concerns is to maintain the strong protection of Class I and Class II watershed lands that is provided by Connecticut statute and upheld by the Department of Public Health. Legislation that undermines protection of Class I and Class II watershed land anywhere in the state sets a dangerous precedent that could someday jeopardize the Farmington Watershed's abundant and high quality supplies of drinking water.

If the commercial possibilities of watershed land are allowed to trump existing state law with bills such as this one, then other water companies can request similar exceptions. Passing Bill 300 suggests that the companies charged with safeguarding our drinking water can also be allowed to profit from disrupting the very vegetation, soils, and hydrology that protect our clean water supplies. The existing statute states that Class I and II water supply lands be "preserved in perpetuity predominantly in their natural scenic and open condition for the protection of natural resources" and "allowing for improvements necessary for the protection or provision of potable water." The exception in Bill 300 flouts both of these provisions. Instead it sets up what is at the very least a conflict of interest and potentially a betrayal of public trust.

Recent events in Michigan underscore the ease with which genuine threats to water quality can be underestimated. Please do not erode Connecticut's exemplary protections for its drinking water. We encourage you to reject this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eileen Fielding". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eileen Fielding
Executive Director