



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Public Health

March 7, 2016

**Commissioner Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H.
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Senate Bill #300 - An Act Concerning New Britain Water Company Land

The Department of Public Health (DPH) is opposed to Senate Bill #300. The proposed bill authorizes the City of New Britain to change the use of its class I and class II water company owned lands to allow for the lease of approximately 131.4 acres for a commercial quarrying operation, subject to certain conditions, including a requirement that the lessee prepare the site for a public drinking water reservoir at the conclusion of the lease. Before the Department can determine if such change of use will have a significant adverse impact upon the present and future purity and adequacy of the Shuttle Meadow Reservoir, the primary public drinking water supply serving New Britain and protected by such class I and class II water company owned lands, the following must be assessed, analyzed and determined:

- 1) impacts to public health and public drinking water quality due to the long term planned construction on New Britain's actively used Shuttle Meadow Reservoir and watershed area. To include likely public health and environmental impacts such change of use will have on local hydrology, forest ecology and wetlands systems within the public drinking water watershed. The Department is particularly concerned with immediate impacts to the Shuttle Meadow Reservoir, especially the removal of the protective forested cover that will be lost during the quarrying. Without this forested cover, there is potential for water quality degradation to New Britain's consumers;
- (2) long-term water supply needs for New Britain as well as interconnected and any feasibly interconnected water companies in the general geographic region surrounding the areas supplied by New Britain's water reservoir system;
- (3) impacts to current safe daily yield during and following construction including any safe daily yield increase or decrease to New Britain's reservoir system that could be supplied;
- (4) likely impact of the change of use on raw reservoir water quality;
- (5) steps available to minimize environmental impacts from the change of use; and

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(6) a summary of conclusion, comparing the environmental impacts and potential environmental and water supply benefits from such change of use.

Section 64 of Spec. Sess. P.A. 07-5 required the Department to commission and supervise, within available appropriations, an independent third party environmental evaluation of the potential effects, including the effects listed above, of allowing such change of use. That public health impact assessment and environmental evaluation was never completed and therefore the potential effects of such change of use are still not known.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's view of this proposal.