



March 7, 2016

TO: Sen. Terry B. Gerratana and Rep. Matthew Ritter, Chairmen; Honorary Members of the Public Health Committee

RE: Testimony for SB 300 AAC New Britain Water Company Land

The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters strongly opposes SB 300 AAC NEW BRITAIN WATER COMPANY LAND because of the unchecked environmental damage it would cause on sensitive habitat in highly protected watershed land.

When this project was first brought before legislators in 2007, CTLCV was also strongly opposed. A bill passed, but was repealed due to overwhelming public outcry about the damage this project would cause to our most highly protected watershed lands—and the lack of full public participation in reviewing the project.

One of the most important functions of Class I and II land is to store water for the water source, whether reservoir or wells. Storage and cleansing take place in undisturbed vegetated soil. So Tilcon project would totally remove 100 acres of groundwater storage to be replaced by a storage reservoir in the decades ahead. This not only violates current legal protections, it does tremendous damage on the ground. The proponents' claims that the benefits of this project will transform the quarried out area into a storage reservoir for drinking water is not the full information that should be considered.

We respectfully request that you do not allow this legislation to proceed until the state's Water Planning Council has completed the Comprehensive Statewide Water Plan, as required by the General Assembly in PA 14-163.

Class I and II are defined as land owned by a water company and that recharges a public drinking water source. In state law and policy, this land holds the highest priority for protection (CGS § 25-37c), closely followed by similar but privately owned source-water land.

Almost any sort of activity on Class I or II requires approval from the Department of Public Health (DPH) for a change of use. The proponents of this project are seeking to bypass this approval process by legislative means, putting our state's water and watershed lands in jeopardy much the same as was proposed in 2017.

Please do not allow this legislation to proceed until it can be fully vetted in the context of the state's Water Planning process. We need a thoughtful and fact-based approach to major decision on all the state's waters. There is no immediate urgency to enable this project at this time, or cause the extensive destruction of vegetation and soil that this bill would permit.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

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