



**Testimony
Elizabeth Gara
Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA)
Before the
Environment Committee
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The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA), a trade association of municipal, private and regional water companies, **supports the intent of HB-5129, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A "SAVE OUR LAKES" NUMBER PLATE TO COMBAT AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES AND CYANOBACTERIA BLOOMS**, which seeks to raise awareness and provide funding for efforts to fight aquatic invasive species and cyanobacteria blooms that threaten the state's lakes and ponds

For water companies, invasive species and cyanobacterial blooms are an increasing concern because they grow rapidly, are difficult if not impossible to eradicate, and can create permanent and serious problems for the state's public water supplies. For example, aquatic invasive species have broad negative implications for water supplies involving the transmission of water to treatment facilities, water quality, recreation, and potentially higher water rates to cover capital and operational costs for managing their impacts.

Potential issues associated with non-native invasive plants such as Eurasian water milfoil in drinking water reservoirs include water quality impacts such as disinfection by-product formation, clogging of intakes and raw water pumps, potential substrates for benthic algae responsible for taste and odor, and overall ecological issues that favor higher algal biomass in reservoirs. Dense growth of invasive plants in shoreline areas can interfere with recreational fishing programs in water supply reservoirs. Successful and cost-effective management of these plant populations in recreational lakes generally involves the use of aquatic herbicides. However, herbicides are generally undesirable for use in public water supply sources because of drinking water contamination concerns.

Recently, non-native aquatic species such as zebra mussels have been found in certain lakes in Connecticut. These species pose an additional risk to public water supply systems. Unfortunately, water intake structures provide an excellent habitat for zebra mussels, which can attach to intake pipes, forming thick layers. A water system in Michigan had to shut down because zebra mussels clogged the intake system, causing pump failure. Control alternatives to manage these impacts are limited and potentially very costly to water utility ratepayers.

CWWA therefore supports the intent of the bill, but respectfully recommends that it be broadened to support efforts to address aquatic invasive species and cyanobacteria blooms that threaten the state's public water supplies and systems.

The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWWA) is an association of private, municipal and regional public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut.