



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
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REPRESENTATIVE GERALDO REYES, JR.
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Public Hearing- February 23, 2018
Environment Committee

H.B. No. 5130 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SEWAGE SPILL RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT AND EXPANDING CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR WASTEWATER OPERATORS.

Good Morning Chairman Kennedy, Chairman Miner, Chairman Demicco, Ranking member Harding, Vice Chairs and members. My name is Geraldo Reyes and I represent the 75th district in Waterbury.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding House Bill 5130, which is very important to the environment of the community I represent and also neighboring areas. In the last several months the Naugatuck River has seen two environmental spills in the Waterbury region.

In October, five million gallons of raw sewage spilled out of Waterbury's waste treatment plant into the Naugatuck River. I saw firsthand how the process needs to be improved in notifying the community. It was unfortunate that it took over a week to notify Waterbury residents, and even longer for towns downstream. When something of this size happens, the public must be made aware of the situation to maintain transparency and safety. Establishing a time frame for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to disclose, through a press release, sewage spills needs to become written in law. In addition, I would like to see timely reporting and up-to-date information on any situation on the DEEP website and other media outlets they control.

The second part of this bill requires continuing education for wastewater treatment facility operators. It will safeguard further environmental disasters from happening. This is commonsense solution to make sure that operators are staying up to date with guidelines and requirements set forth by state and federal governments.

Our environment is what we will leave behind to generations that come. We must take every effort to make sure that mishaps like the October sewage spill do not happen again.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Geraldo Reyes".