



Connecticut Water Pollution Abatement Association

Dedicated to the pursuit of pure water...

February 23, 2018

Testimony in Support of House Bill 5130

Members of the Environment Committee,

The Connecticut Water Pollution Abatement Association (CWPA) was formed in 1966 to address wastewater matters within the State of Connecticut. We represent nearly 100 Water Pollution Control Facilities and a network of over 850 certified wastewater operators serving more than 2,000,000 Connecticut residents. As representatives of the CWPA, we wish to show enthusiastic support for House Bill 5310, which would require continuing education for Wastewater Operators. This Bill will positively affect the Connecticut wastewater community.

Continuing Education requirements for Wastewater Operators will encourage professionals to expand their knowledge through training and education and ultimately enhance the safe and effective practices in the wastewater field. Wastewater utilities are multi-billion-dollar investments (treatment facilities, pipe, billing systems, etc.) designed to protect priceless resources (human health, rivers, groundwater supply, Long Island Sound, etc.). Wastewater operations is a dynamic technology-intensive field that requires routine learning to keep up with the constantly evolving regulations, treatment and management practices.

With this new training requirement, utility employers will need to pay for operator training and allow for training time during work hours. Many Connecticut operators currently feel that professional development is a low priority for their employers. This has resulted in a significant knowledge gap for Connecticut utilities and a deficient wastewater educational network. In fact, 47 states have operator Continuing Education Requirements for wastewater operators and Connecticut is quickly falling behind. Additionally, Water System Operators in CT have had Continuing Education Requirements for more than a decade.

We have polled the Connecticut wastewater community and learned that 95% of Wastewater Operators surveyed are in favor of this legislation. 80+ Water Pollution Control Facilities and a network of 850 certified operators serving more than 2,000,000 Connecticut residents support this Bill.

We strongly believe that Connecticut needs to institute operator training requirements to reengage the wastewater workforce, defend the State's multi-billion-dollar infrastructure investment, and most importantly, protect human health and the environment.