

Dear Environment Committee co-chairpersons and committee members:

I am adding my voice in opposition to SENATE BILL 427 which attempts to PRIVATIZE all wells in the state i.e. removing water from the protection of the CT public trust doctrine i.e. CT Statute Section 22a-15: "there is a public trust in the air, water and other natural resources of the state". SB 427 is not good for CT.

There is already a CT precedent to oppose SB 427 i.e. "the public trust in the air, water and other natural resources of the state". The state of CT sued states west of CT e.g. Ohio because of their toxic air emissions (particularly from coal burning plants) that flowing through the air to CT. Thus polluting CT air. This increased the difficulty of CT to lower CT air toxins to below federal guidelines. It also was/is associated with adverse health events. This is not good for CT.

The costs for care for increased adverse health events would need to be picked up by the state of CT through Medicaid, the HUSKY programs and public medical insurance. The increased care for adverse health events have also been associated with increased absenteeism from schools and work with their consequences and excludes increased use of private medical insurance.

SB 427 would allow large private water utilities with well fields supplying CT drinking water to declare that they "own the groundwater". Any major bottling company could purchase lands, drill multiple wells, and escape any regulation while exporting the water out of state for profit. While I want companies to make a profit, this is not in the best interests of the CT residents and businesses or visitors to CT. Privatization was tried in Bloomfield, CT within the past few years and was met with stiff citizen resistance. This is not good for CT.

In the case of drought, "well owners" could refuse to comply with any water use restrictions. This is not good for CT.

Also, water withdrawn from wells would likely lower the amount of water in CT rivers and reservoirs with which they are hydro-logically connected but would be considered to be untouchable as a "private" resource. Even in a drought. This is not good for CT.

SB 427 is not in the best interests of the vast, vast majority of CT residents or the vast majority of businesses in the state. Only a handful of companies could make short-term profits from privatization of CT water sources. To make profits, companies would likely withdraw more water than is typically used by CT residences, businesses and visitors in a year. This is not good for CT.

Water, like air, does not follow geographic borders whether underground or above ground (i.e. rivers and streams) and can change course over time. Any attempts to circumvent the water plan's balanced and scientific approach to state water decisions and override the foundational principle that our state waters are public... is not good for CT.

You are likely to get feedback from voting citizens and the Green Party of CT.

Sincerely,

Barbara Barry, R.N, B.S.N.
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secretary of the Hartford County chapter of the GPCT;

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