

Dear Chairmen Kennedy and Miner and Members of the CGA Environment Committee:

I am writing to urge you to vote No on SB 427 An Act Concerning Public Trust Components Of The State Water Plan. This bill would eliminate private drinking water wells from the public trust doctrine designed to protect the interests of current and future Connecticut residents.

Our state typically enjoys adequate rainfall and abundant water supply. However in recent years we have been experiencing droughts of increasing frequency and duration. All our drinking water supply sources, whether surface or ground, need sufficient protections to ensure that water is available during times of environmental stress.

This bill will open the way for bottling companies to own large wells and ignore water restrictions because “they own the water”. The excessive pumping needed to maintain a water bottling facility could negatively impact nearby surface waters and neighboring wells, particularly during times of low levels due to drought. Even though we may not be able to see it, surface and ground waters are an interconnected system and they need protection above and below to ensure an adequate and potable supply now and into the future.

In addition to asking you to Vote No because it’s bad public policy, it also seeks to do an end-run around the comprehensive and consensus-based State Water Plan which is now before the legislature. This plan was developed by the Water Planning Council comprised of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Office of Policy and Management, and the Department of Public Health. The Council had a 21-member steering committee, a 20 member Advisory Group, a 24-member Science Subcommittee, and a 32-member Policy subcommittee comprised of public officials, water company representatives, NGO reps, academicians and scientists. The fact that so many stakeholders with competing interests came to consensus is a cause of celebration and support! In other words, this multi-year, science and consensus based plan to guide water management decisions in our state should be adopted and implemented to effectively manage the many competing uses for our state’s water resources.

Please Vote NO on SB 427 An Act Concerning Public Trust Components Of The State Water Plan.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Dunson

355 Taconic Road

Greenwich, CT

