



Testimony of Anne Hulick, RN, MS, JD;
Director, CT Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund

Before the CT General Assembly's Environment Committee, March 14th, 2018

Testimony in opposition of SB 427 AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC TRUST COMPONENTS TO THE STATE WATER PLAN

Dear Senator Kennedy, Senator Miner, Representative Demicco and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

Clean Water Action, a national environmental advocacy and research organization with over 11,000 members in Connecticut, was founded in 1972 due to deep concern about water pollution and led the passage of the U.S. Clean Water Act. Connecticut has been a leader in protecting our state's waters, most recently in passing Public Act 14-163 to require a state-wide water planning process. Clean Water Action was pleased to see the extensive, good work, expert analysis, future planning and stakeholder engagement that went into the development of the State Water Plan (Plan). The plan sets the foundation for on-going work and coordination to manage, protect and conserve our water long into the future.

Senate Bill 427 is inconsistent with the State Water Plan as it arbitrarily exempts "private wells" and thereby challenges the definition of public trust. Water in private wells comes from groundwater aquifers which are surely part of the public trust. The proposed legislation states it is "in the public interest to provide all persons with an adequate remedy to protect the air, water, except private drinking wells, and other natural resources from unreasonable pollution, impairment or destruction. Exempting private wells seems inconsistent with protecting the public interest considering that over 300,000 Connecticut residents and certain businesses rely on private wells.

The term "private well" is also unclear and could easily be misconstrued. "Private wells" could include wells used by large water companies or water bottling companies. Exempting water from wells owned by large users from the public trust and protections proposed and guided by the state's Water Plan could negatively impact public health as well as the quality and quantity of our state's waters.

Connecticut demonstrated significant leadership, commitment and money in the development of a science-based and thoughtfully drafted State Water Plan. This proposal would undercut that plan and poses significant risk to our waters. **Therefore, we strongly oppose SB 427.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne B. Hulick".

Anne Hulick