



March 13, 2018

Senators Kennedy and Miner, Representative Demicco and esteemed members of the Environment Committee:

This testimony relates to S.B. 427-An Act Concerning Public Trust Components of the State Water Plan. There is no doubt that water quantity and quality has rightfully been of concern in Connecticut in recent years. I am interested in touching on the public trust laid out in the water plan and how it relates to nursery and landscape operations.

Judicious use of water is critical and many of our constituents have felt the brunt of limited water resources. Several nurseries were forced to bring in water during the summer and fall of 2015 and some suffered losses regardless. We have become experts in conserving our own critically valuable water resources as a result of being good stewards as well as business people. We have taken numerous steps, including recapturing more water than ever and treating that water to make it more effective, modifying our watering schedules, auditing the efficiency of our irrigation systems and adjusting what growing medium is used to allow better water holding capacity while still draining well enough to avoid fungal problems in roots.

Farms are currently regulated for our water use. Diversion permits through the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection are required for anyone pumping more than 50,000 gallons of water on any day of the year. The engineering to meet specifications per DEEP regulation is extensive to show that our pumping will not adversely affect surrounding watersheds.

The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension has been conducting research on innovations and is of great help assisting farmers to find grants to improve irrigation efficiency.

Aquarion has already limited irrigation in landscapes in large parts of the state to protect their water resources. Further layers of oversight could prove to be unwieldy and make both compliance and enforcement challenging for stakeholders and officials.

Making sure landscapes appropriately establish is critical to conserving water through Green Infrastructure that allows water to percolate through friable soil and recharge ground water supplies. Barren ground tends to have a great deal of surface tension, contributing to both erosion and runoff. By making sure that plants establish through carefully monitored irrigation, we are making sure that our watersheds are providing optimal yield for critical aquifer recharge.

For all the above reasons, I can say that we are sufficiently regulated and consistently improving through existing bureaucracy and resources made available to us. As always, I welcome an opportunity to further discuss this or any other matters relevant to the nursery or landscape industry.

Sincerely,

Darryl Newman

Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association Co-Legislative Chair