



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Environment Committee

March 14, 2018

**Commissioner Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H.
860-509-7101**

Senate Bill 427 - An Act Concerning Public Trust Components of the State Water Plan

The Department of Public Health (DPH) is opposed to Senate Bill 427, which declares that private drinking wells are not held in the public trust and therefore would not be subject to guidance by the State Water Plan. We are opposed to the bill since all water is public trust and the State Water Plan addresses it as such. The Department would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

The State Water Plan is a comprehensive plan for the management of all water resources in the state. Accordingly, private wells are naturally considered and discussed in the plan as there are approximately 322,578 private wells that serve almost 23 percent of the state's population. Withdrawals from private wells are one of the components of the water inventory in the plan. The water inventory is used to quantify and understand the movement of water through the hydrologic cycle and is prepared, among other things, to support water planning and policy making decisions. Private wells are also considered in the recommendations section of the State Water Plan. In that section, the plan recommends, but does not mandate, the implementation of a water quality testing and reporting program for private wells with automatic reporting to the Department as well as local health departments and districts. It also recommends the implementation of a water volume monitoring or reporting program for private wells, but recognizes that it may be impractical. Finally, the State Water Plan recommends that groundwater protection best practices be developed and extended to protect private wells. While the plan does not regulate private wells, or any source of water for that matter, it does offer recommendations and goals with respect to private wells as they are a water resource in Connecticut that must be considered in water resource management planning and decisions. The Department would also like to remind the Environment Committee that both public and private wells use groundwater in our state; therefore the public interest to provide all persons with an adequate remedy to protect our state's water resources would also extend to private wells.

Thank you for your consideration of this information. We encourage Committee members to reach out to the Department with any questions.

*Phone: (860) 509-7269,
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 13GRE, P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
An Equal Opportunity Employer*