



**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO RAISED SB 427:
AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC TRUST COMPONENTS of the STATE WATER PLAN**

Save Our Water CT is a non-partisan, citizen-led group working to protect Connecticut's waters through increased citizen engagement. Though we started in Bloomfield to fight the incursion of a massive water bottling plant, we now reach throughout the state, allying ourselves with multiple environmental organizations concerned with protection of our water resources. Our core belief is that:

WATER IS A PUBLIC RESOURCE, BELONGING TO THE PEOPLE OF CT AND HELD IN TRUST BY THE STATE TO BE MANAGED SUSTAINABLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF GENERATIONS TO COME.

Raised SB 427 is problematic in multiple ways and should **not** be voted out of Committee:

- This bill represents an attempt to subvert CT's Environmental Protection Act by removing a large proportion of water ("private drinking water wells of any size") from the public trust considerations of CGS 22a-15.
- It counters the foundational principle that Connecticut's waters are a natural resource which need to be managed sustainably for all for generations to come. We have "rights" under existing state regulations which allow us to responsibly use water, but these rights are not absolute. They may, on rare occasions, be overridden by the public interest in decisions involving water resources.
- This law misunderstands the state water plan. The plan has no regulatory force: it is a platform for best practices in future decision making about our water resources.
- This bill fails to recognize the now scientifically proven connection between surface and ground water. According to the USGS, it is invalid, inappropriate, and scientifically mistaken to view groundwater from wells as somehow separate from the surface water in rivers and reservoirs. What happens to one effects the other. Removing one part of the system from public oversight opens the other components to harm.
- The provisions of this law would allow major water utilities to claim their well fields are now their private property and not subject to state regulation. A large water bottling plant could purchase land and drill multiple wells, exporting the water out of state with impunity. During droughts, private well owners could claim they are not subject to any water restrictions.

Save Our Water CT **strongly opposes** Raised S.B. 457. Thank you for considering our view.

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