



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

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Astronomy and Geophysics
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March 14, 2018

Dear Sen. Ted Kennedy Jr., Sen. Craig Miner, and Rep. Mike Demicco,

As a citizen of Connecticut, an expert in hydrology and a former member (2006-2009) of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Instream Flow Scientific and Technical Workgroup, I am writing to express concern over SB 427: AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC TRUST COMPONENTS OF THE STATE WATER PLAN, which appears to weaken regulation and protection for our state's water resources. For two years, I worked as a groundwater consultant undertaking these types of investigations in New England. For more than two decades, I have taught hydrology at Connecticut College to a new generation of hydrologists, many of whom have begun their own careers as hydrogeologists. Therefore, I feel confident that I understand the basic science involved in this legislation. However, I must admit that I do not understand its logic.

Rivers Alliance of Connecticut a group I support, alerted me to proposed legislation and language that would except private wells from the public trust. It is not clear in the legislation how private drinking wells are defined. In general, water supply wells provide a large percentage of the population with drinking water. My own home is supplied by community wells owned by a private company. It is not obvious to me if these wells would be impacted by these new exemptions. It is also not clear why private wells should be exempt. Groundwater exists in large areas that can be difficult to delineate with confidence. The direction of flow, volume of available water and potential for contamination are all difficult to ascertain without intensive field investigations that are prohibitively expensive in many cases. The state also has a history of excessive withdrawals that then impact surface water resources. The Fenton River case with the University of Connecticut wells is a case in point. Therefore, I am particularly concerned that this proposed legislation would open loopholes in environmental protection laws that would allow abuses that would be very difficult to document or remedy.

As I frequently tell my students, water is this country's most valuable liquid resource. Our legislature must do everything in their power to protect drinking water for the

current and future generations. I urge you to avoid exempting private wells from laws governing the public trust.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug M. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Douglas M. Thompson
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