



## Connecticut Department of Public Health

### Testimony Presented Before the Public Health Committee

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Commissioner Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H.  
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### House Bill 5151 - An Act Concerning The Department Of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Safe Drinking Water

The Department of Public Health (DPH) supports House Bill 5151, which makes several revisions to the statutes regarding safe drinking water. The Department would like to thank the Public Health Committee for raising DPH's bill, and for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Section 1 would require a water company, as defined in section [25-32a](#) of the general statutes, to provide a fiscal and asset management plan for all of the capital assets that comprise each of the water company's community public water systems that serve 1,000 or fewer residents. This plan would be due to the Department by January 1, 2021. There are approximately 330 community public water systems that would be required to produce these plans. Water companies regulated by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), water companies that submit water supply plans to DPH pursuant to section [25-32d](#) of the general statutes, and state agencies would be exempted from the requirement to submit a fiscal and asset management plan.

The Department is proposing that certain water systems produce these plans because many of these water systems are aging and in need of a systematic review to determine if they should be replaced. The fiscal and asset management plan would include, at a minimum: A list of all of the capital assets of the community public water system; the useful life of such capital assets; and the water company's plan for the reconditioning, refurbishment, or replacement of such capital assets. Both DPH and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) consider fiscal and asset management planning to be critical to ensuring public water systems are managed properly and are in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations regarding public drinking water. A water company's use of aging infrastructure can result in water system failure, purity and adequacy concerns, and costly repairs. Receipt of the fiscal and asset management plan, which would be updated annually by the water company, would enable the Department to evaluate both the financial and physical needs of community public water systems.

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In addition, this bill would require a small water company that serves 1,000 or fewer residents to assess the condition of its hydropneumatic pressure tanks and provide the results of the assessment to DPH. The assessment would identify aging infrastructure, and enhance the safety of employees working at the public water system by minimizing the risk of an explosion of a hydropneumatic pressure tank. In June 2015, the Department was notified that an older hydropneumatic pressure tank exploded unexpectedly. Thankfully, this occurred in the middle of the night and no one was injured in the explosion. The language in this bill aims to ensure that this does not happen again.

Section 2 would revise the Department's civil penalties statutes to require the Commissioner of Public Health to publish, on the DPH website, civil penalties that may be imposed under section [25-32e](#) of the general statutes, rather than adopting regulations each time the EPA promulgates a new federal rule pertinent to this issue. Prior to publishing the civil penalties, DPH would be required to publish notice in the Connecticut Law Journal of the Department's intention to post the civil penalties on the DPH website as well as the date on which a public hearing regarding such civil penalties will be held. When establishing the civil penalties, the Commissioner of Public Health shall take into consideration the size or number of persons served by a water company, the level of assessment necessary to insure immediate and continued compliance with such provision, and the character and degree of injury or impairment to, or interference with, or threat thereof to the purity of drinking water supplies.

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