



Testimony
Elizabeth Gara
Connecticut Water Works Association (CWNA)
Before the
Banking Committee
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The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWNA), which represents municipal, private and regional water companies, respectfully submits comments in **support of the intent** of **SB-25, AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT INFRASTRUCTURE BANK AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR STATE-FUNDED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.**

As drafted, SB-25 creates a mechanism to fund infrastructure improvements, including projects related to water treatment plants, distribution systems and pumping stations, wastewater treatment plants, collections systems and pumping stations, environmental infrastructure, green technology, and photovoltaic facilities, which are of particular importance to public water suppliers.

A reliable water infrastructure that delivers a safe supply of water to residents and businesses is critical to the public health and safety of our communities. Investing in infrastructure replacement allows water companies to meet the needs of current customers while protecting systems and resources for future generations. It also improves water quality and reliability of service and helps save precious water resources by minimizing breaks and leaks in the distribution system.

Understanding and responding to the potential implications of climate change on water systems is important for the future. Continuing to promote the conservation and protection of watershed and aquifer protection lands can protect the quality of water supplies while providing other benefits for the citizens of the state.

Moreover, water companies are faced with a number of other infrastructure projects that must be addressed, including projects needed to meet new and pending regulatory requirements under the Safe Drinking Water Act, including emerging contaminants such as PFAS. In addition, the implementation of the state's stream flow regulations will require many water companies to make significant upgrades to dams and systems to make the required reservoir releases.

The state's water companies face a major challenge in replacing aging water infrastructure at a time when state and municipal funds are limited, and utilities are under pressure to minimize or postpone rate hikes in a struggling economy. Although



some funding is available from the federal government, EPA estimates that over \$655 in water infrastructure is needed over the next 20 years to keep pace with projected investment needs.

Despite limited resources, to their credit, many Connecticut water utilities are trying to meet this challenge head on. Many utilities have taken steps to make necessary system improvements, even if it means increases to customer rates. Water utilities serving more than 1,000 customers are required to develop asset management plans for the repair, renewal, and rehabilitation of infrastructure as part of their water supply plans.

In addition, Connecticut does have some funding mechanisms in place to assist water companies in funding infrastructure projects. Connecticut's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) administered by the state Department of Public Health Drinking Water Division relies on federal funds to assist water companies in financing drinking water infrastructure projects. The Clean Water Fund, administered by the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, provides financial assistance to municipalities for projects addressing wastewater needs.

CWWA would be pleased to work with lawmakers to determine how this program will coordinate with other funding mechanisms to ensure adequate funding to address the infrastructure needs of the state's public water suppliers.

Thank you.