

Testimony to the Appropriations, Energy & Technology and Human Services Committees

August 20, 2021

Comments on the Administration of the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

The Regional Water Authority (RWA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the administration of the **Connecticut Low Income Household Water Assistance Program**.

The RWA is a nonprofit, public corporation and political subdivision of the state. Our mission is to provide our customers with high-quality water at a reasonable cost while promoting the preservation of watershed land and aquifers. We provide approximately 42.5 million gallons of water per day to some 430,000 consumers in 15 communities in our region.

We understand the importance of helping customers maintain water service. Since 2016, the RWA has offered relief for families having difficulty paying their water bills, through our Residential Water Assistance Program. The RWA has partnered with Dollar Energy Fund to ensure eligible customers receive financial assistance to pay their water bills.

The RWA strongly supports the provision of the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) plan that reads, “Contract with Community Action Agencies or entities to provide standardized services to all eligible households; including those households receiving assistance from DSS programs, and to process applications from any such households wishing to apply for benefits.” Again, we support continuing to utilize Dollar Energy Fund, and similar entities to administer a LIHWAP to our customers in need of financial aid.

Since the LIHWAP plan indicates that funds will be provided to owners or operators of public water systems or treatment works, we believe the LIHWAP guidance and other vendor agreements with owners or operators of public water systems or treatment works should also ensure that the water companies are able to use existing entities and guidelines to administer the program. By allowing the RWA to continue using our existing programs, we can continue helping our customers in need of financial aid.

As a member of the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA), the RWA also support CWWA’s comments on the LIHWAP.

Thank you for considering the RWA’s comments. If you have additional questions, please contact Lori Vitagliano, Government and Public Relations Specialist, at 203-889-1981 or by email at lvitagliano@rwater.com.