

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
February 11, 2020**

TESTIMONY OF

**THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT**

**H.B. No. 5005: AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021**

The Metropolitan District (the “MDC”), a specially-chartered municipal corporation which includes the municipalities of Bloomfield, East Hartford, Hartford, Newington, Rocky Hill, West Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor, provides potable water services to over 400,000 people located within the eight member towns and parts of East Granby, Farmington, Glastonbury, Portland, South Windsor and Windsor Locks. In addition, the MDC provides wastewater treatment services to the customers located and residing within its eight member towns with four water pollution control facilities located throughout the MDC region, the largest one located in the South Meadows area of the City of Hartford. The MDC submits this testimony in order to express its concerns regarding Governor Lamont’s proposal to provide the sum of \$354,000 for DEEP to initiate statewide ground water and sediment sampling.

In July, 2019, the Governor established the Connecticut Interagency PFAS Task Force and charged the Task Force with the responsibility of producing, by November 2019, a PFAS Action Plan laying out a comprehensive State strategy to: 1) minimize environmental exposure to PFAS for Connecticut residents; 2) minimize future releases of PFAS to the environment; and 3) identify, assess and clean up historical releases of PFAS to the environment. Nevertheless, despite this broad directive, the proposed budget adjustment provides an inadequate amount of funding, \$857,000, to effectively address the problem. Furthermore, the allocation of this funding appears to disregard the root of the problem, which is the source of the contamination. The largest allocation of funding, \$354,000, is directed to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to initiate statewide surface water and sediment sampling. In addition, there is \$282,000 for staff at DPH to test water for PFAS, \$120,500 for the Department of Emergency Services to replace its firefighting foam that contains PFAS, and capital funding of \$2 million to develop a takeback program that will assist local fire departments in replacing firefighting foam containing PFAS with safer alternatives and to test for PFAS in private wells.

The Governor and policymakers are correct that appropriate attention needs to be centered on PFAS; however, while the Governor is concerned about drinking water contamination, attention must be focused on the source of the problem, not just its consequences. It has been documented by DEEP that landfills are a major source of

PFAS, and it is the leachate from landfills that poses the more immediate threat to the State's water supply from wells rather than the occasional use of firefighting foam.

Indeed, even DEEP is discharging leachate from the DEEP-controlled landfill located in the North Meadows of Hartford into the MDC sanitary sewer system. In doing so, DEEP has acted as both the permitting agency and the permittee. Aside from the obvious conflict, this presents a untenable problem for the receiving wastewater facility, or publicly owned treatment facility (POTW), in that the PFAS-laden discharge is allowed to be transmitted from the point source – the landfill - to a treatment facility that is not designed to remove such PFAS contaminants from that which is discharged into the Connecticut River; in fact, no wastewater treatment system is designed to remove these chemicals. If the POTW is determined to be the point source for PFAS contamination, DEEP, by issuing a permit to itself, could be relieved of any liability to remediate, remove and treat their discharge. In the MDC's situation, it would be patently unfair for the eight member towns of the MDC to solely bear the financial burden of PFAS contamination when we all know that the Hartford Landfill was used by the State, MIRA and countless municipalities throughout the area.

While the MDC supports the development of appropriate standards and alternatives to firefighting foam that currently is being used, the use of firefighting foam is, candidly, extraordinary. On the other hand, the leachate from landfills containing remarkable levels of PFAS going into wastewater treatment systems that cannot be designed to remove the PFAS is happening every minute of every day! Yet, this fact seems to almost be ignored in this budget.

If the State wishes to make a meaningful impact on PFAS remediation, it is imperative that there be an appropriate focus on the landfills in this State. DEEP already has established that point source remediation at the Hartford Landfill can successfully be accomplished; it did occur for, albeit, a brief period of time. The focus should be on this.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.