

**Testimony to the Environment Committee
March 8, 2021**

House Bill 6441 An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority 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. The source of this water is a system of watershed and aquifer areas that cover about 120 square miles within 24 municipalities. Much of our more than 27,000 acres of land is managed for watershed protection, timber resource conservation, wildlife habitat, open space, education and research.

The Regional Water Authority (RWA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in support of Section 19 of **House Bill 6441 An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation**.

The RWA applauds the Environment Committee for taking up this very important issue. The water industry faces significant challenges posed by aging and deteriorating infrastructure. Section 19 of House Bill 6441 addresses this concern by creating an Environmental Infrastructure Fund within the Connecticut Green Bank.

Connecticut's water utilities are responsible for providing safe, reliable drinking water to the residents of our state, and sound infrastructure is the foundation that ensures delivery of this essential natural resource.

Aging water infrastructure is a critical issue that affects all residents of Connecticut and our nation. This bill will create a mechanism that positions utilities, through the Connecticut Green Bank, to be ready to receive potential state and federal environmental infrastructure investments.

The RWA's distribution system includes approximately 1,700 miles of pipe. Annually, we invest millions of dollars in infrastructure improvement projects to upgrade our water system to provide for and protect the water supply, meet drinking water standards, and support fire protection and public safety throughout our region.

Investment is needed to better prepare our state's water infrastructure for the future. Failing to invest in water infrastructure also affects the businesses that are reliant on water. Infrastructure investments also create jobs and support the manufacturing sector.

Enabling water utilities to have access to an additional source of funding will improve our ability to ensure water quality, service reliability and water flows throughout water systems that will benefit our customers, protect human health, preserve the environment, support manufacturing and creates jobs.

Thank you for considering the Regional Water Authority'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.