

Public Hearing – February 3, 2021
Planning and Development Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Katie S. Dykes

Senate Bill No. 701 – An Act Concerning the Bolton Lakes Regional Water Pollution Control Authority

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Senate Bill No. 701 – An Act Concerning the Bolton Lakes Regional Water Pollution Control Authority. The purpose of this bill is to permit the board of directors of the Bolton Lakes Regional Water Pollution Control Authority to authorize expansion of the authority’s wastewater system into the town of Coventry and take any action the board deems necessary to implement such expansion.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has concerns with this bill because the legislation as drafted is overly broad, may not achieve its intended purpose, and may have unintended consequences.

The bill would allow expansion of the Bolton Lakes Regional Water Pollution Control Authority into all of Coventry without regard for any existing or future sewer service area designations and with no restrictions on capacity, properties or usage. This broad expansion authority would bypass many requirements and processes that were established to protect current customers and the functionality of the existing wastewater infrastructure. In addition, the bill ignores existing local ordinances of Bolton, Vernon, Manchester and Coventry and existing agreements. The current Clean Water Fund agreement for the Bolton Lakes Regional Water Pollution Control Authority wastewater system limits the service area for the existing infrastructure. This bill creates an inconsistency with that agreement and associated state and federal funding requirements. Further, bond issuance may impose restrictions on the modification or expansion of this wastewater system that warrants evaluation. This legislation would not supersede federal law and any governing bond restrictions.

DEEP is actively working with the Bolton Lakes Regional Water Pollution Control Authority and the Town of Coventry to address the underlying intent of the bill. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the committee to identify language which could address the specific aspects of the bill noted above.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact James Albis at James.Albis@ct.gov.