

Planning and Development Committee
February 1, 2021

Dear Co-Chair Cassano, Co-Chair Vahey and members of the Committee,

I am writing in regard to raised S.B. 701: An Act Concerning the Bolton Lakes Regional Water Pollution Authority and urge you to act favorably on this in Committee.

Eastern Connecticut is hurting. Our rural communities endure poverty, food deserts, lack of healthcare access, and very limited infrastructure. In our towns this looks very different than in urban and suburban areas. Quite honestly, we do not want to be the "Forgotten Corner" of Connecticut. It is time for the legislature to look to our rural communities and find whatever ways possible to support us. Long before the additional impact of COVID we were losing our small businesses, jobs, and transportation infrastructure. As we try to rebuild post-pandemic we must work together and collaborate with our neighboring towns. This sewer expansion bill represents an excellent example of such partnership between towns.

Coventry, Bolton and Manchester have been working together on this limited expansion project into Coventry for a number of years. It represents the only realistic way for Coventry to bring new business to one of our few commercially zoned areas. There must be access to water and wastewater treatment for business development. Since route 44 is a main thoroughfare between Coventry and Storrs, as well as into the rest of eastern CT, it presents attractive potential for commercial development. It is for these reasons that Coventry has already invested \$70,000 of our precious taxpayer resources into studies and planning. We recognize that the limited sewer expansion project is critical because no other location on route 44 in Coventry has this opportunity to tie into sewers. The soils are classified as "Very Limited" for subsurface septic systems and would require prohibitively expensive constructed fill leaching fields.

Our proposed sewer expansion is consistent with the local, regional and state Conservation and Development policies. We envision that completion of the project will provide locations for essential needs such as medical offices, community program centers such as a community YMCA, and higher density housing, which aligns with the state's goal to increase access to affordable housing. Establishing this node is in line, as well, with bringing increased public transportation to the route 44 corridor between Hartford and Storrs downtown and the UConn campuses.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lisa Thomas
Coventry Town Councilwoman
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