

Daniel V. Jerram
First Selectman



Town Hall
530 Main Street
Post Office Box 316
New Hartford, CT
06057

Mr. Jason M. Coite
University of Connecticut – Office of Environmental Policy
31 LeDoyt Road, U-3055
Storrs, CT 06269-3055

January 30, 2013

Re: Potential Sources of Water Supply

Dear Mr. Coite,

Over the past few weeks I've had the opportunity to follow state wide news reports relating to the University of Connecticut's need to improve public water supply to the Storrs Campus that have been documented in the *Environmental Impact Evaluation for Potential Sources of Water Supply (EIE)* prepared by Milone & McBroom (11/2012). The UConn *EIE* selects the Barkhamsted and Nepaug Reservoirs in the "Farmington River Basin" as one of three potential options for enhancing public water supply to UCONN's Storrs campus, the Town of Mansfield and the Technology Park at the University, all areas being located outside the Metropolitan District Commission's (MDC) existing service area.

We in New Hartford are concerned that all available options have yet to receive the benefit of adequate research or sufficient public discussion so that the pro's and con's of each of the three alternative plans can be adequately understood by all impacted parties, especially the people of the Town of New Hartford. I attended the public presentation on January 17, 2013, at the Farmington Town Hall, but was disappointed to learn that only the MDC would present information pertaining to their proposal. They answered many questions. It would have been nice to have the Connecticut Water Company and Windham Water Works available to offer details on their proposals to supply UConn so that local attendees could hear the details of all three plans at the same time and begin the process of developing an informed opinion.

In New Hartford, we have a great partnership with the MDC. With nearly 2,500 acres the MDC remains New Hartford's largest single land owner and its top taxpayer. That said, town residents remain concerned with any proposal that would seek to change the status quo, and possibly threaten, however remotely, the environmental balance of the watershed lands in our community and the reservoirs and rivers they help sustain. The Barkhamsted Reservoir supplies Lake McDonough, home of Stanclift Cove, a municipal beach shared by the Towns of New Hartford and Barkhamsted since 1965. We remain concerned that approval of this diversion has the potential to lower reservoir reserve levels, especially in times of drought, potentially jeopardizing this pristine lake and the recreational amenities it provides to New Hartford (and Barkhamsted) residents. The UConn *EIE* makes no mention of the seasonal nature of the University calendar, or any correlation to the reservoir reserve levels required during those dry late summer months. Will a proposed diversion have an impact on Stanclift Cove during that time period? Will fall/winter draw downs be considered in the analysis? With further study and more data we would know whether or not our concerns are warranted.

Daniel V. Jerram
First Selectman



Town Hall
530 Main Street
Post Office Box 316
New Hartford, CT
06057

The Farmington River is an integral component of New Hartford's residents daily life. Residents and tourists enjoy canoeing, kayaking, tubing and world class fishing for recreation. This Federally designated Wild & Scenic River, along with Ski Sundown, has become the life blood of our local economy, supporting many local jobs. Over the past few years, drought like conditions have had a tremendous impact on the river, most recently in 2010 and 2012 when Trout fishing was suspended due in part to low water levels. While the MDC proposal currently under consideration does not appear to access water from the west branch of the Farmington River, it will obligate a substantial portion of the MDC's remaining available daily flow (a pipe with 5MGD capacity would access UConn from 12.6MGD available flow) from the east branch. Any future request of similar size has our residents concerned that flows from the west branch, currently not included within the proposal, would be at risk. Further study and discourse could alleviate the fear of residents.

While "quality of life" concerns are very important, the river means more to the Town of New Hartford than simply the recreational amenities that the river provides. The Town of New Hartford relies on the river for processing of waste water. The Town of New Hartford also holds dual franchise rights (with MDC) for public water supply within the Farmington River basin within New Hartford, including our primary drinking water well located just 100 feet from the river's edge on Black Bridge Road that supplies the majority of homes in the Route 44 corridor (not far from the confluence of the east and west branches). Any proposal that has the future potential to significantly alter the daily flows within the river, and possibly impact our public utilities, is a source of great concern to us! Again, without the benefit of further study, the impact of this proposal is unknown.

I believe that most all New Hartford residents share the desire of University Officials to appropriately plan for the future infrastructure needs of our flagship university so that current and future students have all the tools they need to compete in the world economy. That said, we in New Hartford are concerned that the research completed to date is inadequate to make an informed decision. On behalf of the people of the Town of New Hartford, I request that University Officials look beyond the existing *EIE*, continue to conduct research as to the impact of the three alternative plans, and improve public discourse specifically to include the Farmington River towns, so that when the process is complete, we'll all be confident that the best interests of all have been considered and an option is selected that will serve all of the people of the State of Connecticut well into the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Daniel V. Jerram
First Selectman

CC: Selectman Alesia Kennerson & Selectman Jack Casey
Board of Finance Chairman Ben Witte, WPCA Chairman Bob Kryzs