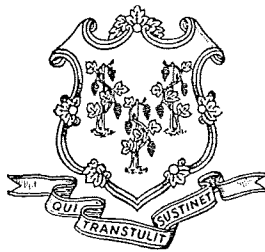


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State of Connecticut
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Public Health Committee

March 16, 2018

Good day, Senator Cassano, Logan, Rep. Lemar, Ranking Members committee members.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Marilyn Moore, I am a Senator and I represent the 22nd District of Bridgeport, Trumbull, and Monroe. I am here today to ask for your support for Raised Bill 5509 ***AA Concerning Water Pollution Control Authorities.***

Sewer Use Fees

The WPCA charges a sewer user fee for the use of the sewer system. This sewer user fee is charged to all owners of property connected to the sanitary sewer system.

The user fee is calculated using water use supplied by Aquarion Water Company in hundred cubic feet (CCF). The user fee for the Fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017 is \$5.945 per CCF. For Example: water use of 20 CCF x \$5.945 equals a sewer bill of \$118.90.

Sewer use bills are issued approximately 20 to 30 days after water usage is read by Aquarion Water Company. Most owners are billed four times a year except for large water users, which are billed monthly. Payment is due within 30 days of the billing date.

I am here today at the request of constituents. I've received numerous complaints from constituents who live and own property in Bridgeport regarding the Water Pollution Control Authority and the practices of the agents contracted by the City of Bridgeport to collect overdue bills.

Last year, I engaged a law student from Quinnipiac to investigate their complaints. The law intern conducted research and analysis of the process to determine if the constituent's complaints were valid.

The law student found that in most cases collections were done on a timely manner and in cases where there was an error the homeowner challenged the process with some success. Those who were successful were so because of their determination and diligence. Several of the persons I spoke with regarding their foreclosures had little success navigating through the myriad of filings and just gave up.



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Once the homeowner is delinquent the collection process takes place and the homeowner receives notifications of delinquencies, advising them of interest, and associated collection fees. In Bridgeport, one of the legal firms contracted to conduct collections has been doing so for nearly twenty years. The accumulation of fees sometimes exceeds the original amount owed and that begins part of the problem for the homeowner in ever catching up.

The penalties and fees can accumulate with compound interest making it very difficult for the property owner to settle the debt. We found an exuberant amount of homes that went through the foreclosure process that had more fees owed than for water use. -We also found that there is an LLC purchasing the properties that is associated with the accessor.

I've come here today for several reasons; one to give the homeowners an opportunity to share their experiences, voice their dissatisfaction and the other to request that the interest rate for overdue WPCA bills be lowered or not computed at a compound rate. Also, that legislation be drafted that prohibits the accessor from purchasing properties they have any involvement with. Finally, because of the irregularities found throughout our investigation merits this committee to consider designating the WPCA a public utility that would follow the same collection procedures that come under the authority of the Public Utilities Regulation Authority.

Thank you for your time and consideration.