



EST. 1871

# CITY OF NEW BRITAIN

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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State of Connecticut  
Water Planning Council

June 6<sup>th</sup> 2018

Dear Chairman Betkoski and Members of the Water Planning Council:

I am writing this letter to express support for Jim Ericson of Lenard Engineering and his detailed response to the Water Planning Council comments regarding the environmental study of the proposed reservoir.

Let me begin by saying that I started my tenure as Acting Director in December 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 when the water supply of the New Britain reservoirs were at historically low levels, levels not seen since the 1960's. It was my first official act as acting director to inform the MDC that the New Britain Water Department was exercising its rights to withdraw 5 million gallons of water per day from the Neapuag reservoir; also an action not performed since the 1960's.

I must point out the MDC honored their contractual obligation even though they were also at historically low reservoir levels and were also facing water restrictions of their own.

The withdrawal of water lasted for two months at a substantial cost to the department, and for the first time in my career at the water department revenue could not cover the operational cost of the department due to this added expense. This deficit required the transfer of funds earmarked for long term system improvements to cover the deficit.

The Water Planning Council stated in its comments that the need for the reservoir was not shown, since population growth projections were within the existing systems capacity and that a number of unlikely events would have to occur to reach a point where the existing system would not be able to meet the average daily water demand.

I respectfully disagree with these conclusions, since Lenard used the figures used by the state agencies and other government entities that determined that

future water planning is needed now to prepare for impending climate change. The state's own water plan predicts more intense periods of drought and heavy rains.

Additionally, population growth in the Central Connecticut region is predicted to be over ten percent; this not only includes New Britain but all towns within the region, many of whom will need to develop future drinking water sources as identified in the Central Connecticut WUCC. This proposed reservoir can be the cornerstone of a regional supply that will benefit all the citizens of the Central Connecticut region. If this reservoir were to be built it will provide an opportunity for regionalization of water supplies and limit the environmental impacts of developing multiple future drinking water sources in the region.

Lenard has also identified other questionable conclusions, such as the quality of the water being used to fill the reservoirs, the report states that the White Bridge Surface Water and Well stations will be the primary source of this water, which are already approved sources of drinking water that have been used since the 1920's without incident.

The Water Planning Council comments also stated the water quality of the Shuttle meadow reservoir was likely to be negatively impacted by the mining operations needed to create the reservoir; again I respectfully disagree since any and all negative impacts can be controlled through proper site planning and good management practices.

The Water Planning Council comments also questions the quality of the water that will be held in the proposed reservoir due to the fact that explosives are used in mining operations and the latest round of testing since used different standards of detection, while it is true the tests had different detection limits the tests performed by Lenard's sub consultant meet the present mandated standards required for water quality testing.

Additionally periodic testing of water sources is part of the standard mandated operating procedures used by water companies to determine if water is viably potable and before any approval is granted for use of a reservoir by the Connecticut Department of Public Health; testing must be conducted to determine that it meets all standards required by the Connecticut Public Health Code.

The Water Planning Council also stated that alternatives of other sources of water were not analyzed, such as the use of the Patton Brook Well and the creation of a reservoir in Burlington known as the Lamson's corner. The

reason these were not included was that this was not a requirement of the Public Act. While both these locations were not researched it is fair to say both have their own set of difficulties.

The Patton Brook Well was leased to the town of Southington from the 1970's up until three years ago. It was not until last fall that the New Britain Water Department actually connected the well to its raw water transmission line.

This was first time that New Britain utilized the well since the 1970's and while the results showed the well has the ability to produce up to a million gallons of water per day under the conditions that existed at that time, other tests performed during this period also showed that the use of the well is hydraulically restricted since it shares a common transmission line with the Wolcott Reservoir, which when running produces pressure that limits the amount of water that the well can pump into the pipeline, to less than half a million gallons per day when flowing to the Wasel Reservoir. Additionally more studies have to be performed since at the time when these tests were conducted ground water levels were high and without an aquifer study it cannot be determined how the ground water aquifer will perform during periods of drought since the well is shallow, with an approximate depth of 40 feet.

Again while the Lamson's Corner Reservoir was not mentioned in the report it must be noted the creation of a reservoir at this site would more than likely have greater environmental impacts than creating the proposed reservoir. A Lamson's Corner Reservoir would flood approximately two hundred and fifty acres of pristine forest land, of which over one hundred acres are identified as wetlands, as well as the destruction of a number of sites that are listed on the National Diversity Data Base.

Additionally building the Lamson's Corner reservoir would require the relocation of a portion of both state and town roads which would come at a high cost.

In conclusion, as you have read, I believe that this proposed reservoir would be a great benefit to people of the region and if it is properly managed, it would provide safe drinking water during periods of drought and have the ability to hold a large amount of water collected during periods of heavy rain, all while having less environmental impacts than that of the Lamson's Corner reservoir. I also believe that creation of this reservoir is needed to ensure that future water needs of the people of the region are met. While the

effects of climate change are hard to foresee I believe the time to act is now before this opportunity passes away.

If possible, I would like to schedule a meeting to go over the Water Planning Council's comments and Lenard's and my own responses to your comments; please contact me to set up a date.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ramon Esponda, PE, ME  
Acting Deputy Director of Public Works  
City of New Britain-Utilities Division