

Angel Lopez Written Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill S321 Sub A

June 21, 2021

To the Distinguished Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

Water is Life, Water is a Human Right. My name is Angel Lopez of Providence, Co-Founder and Co-Leader of the 2019 Land & Water Sovereignty Campaign up until the time the bills to publicly sell off Providence Water were pulled from the General Assembly. I attest that my biometric information is not for Sale. I write you today 100% confident, to strongly urge all on this committee to look out for the best interests of your neighbors, constituents, and family members living in Rhode Island and kill this bill. I want to remind everyone that we continue to be a democratic society and hold elections.

The powers bestowed upon the Director of the DEM with the passage of Senate Bill S321 should not be granted to any appointed position. S321 describes 37 powers and duties bestowed upon "The Director". A few of those powers are to exercise the functions, powers, and duties of the Department of Health, to Set minimum pollution standards for solid waste and hazardous chemicals, but not PFAS, and to appoint any human being, corporation, or state or municipal agency to enforce policies in the Director's name. House Committee on Judiciary members, you cannot keep your arms crossed today. This is a time of action, and you will not only be giving up my right to advocate for my health, my community, and my business, you will also be giving up the rights of your neighbors to participate civically, along with your rights and the rights of your colleagues in the House to formally intervene.

I want to either remind or inform all of you about the Pollution/Contamination by Barletta Construction at the 6/10 Connector Construction Site during the Spring and Summer of 2020. It occurred in my neighborhood along the border of Silver Lake and Olneyville. That Company trucked in toxic construction debris from Massachusetts and Pawtucket to mix with the dirt exceeding federal contamination levels. The RIDEM did not penalize, fine, or remove the company from the Contract. Also, a water line was consistently running water on Magnolia Street all those months 24 hours a day. Are you considering granting the Director that allowed Barletta to continue abusing municipal funds and excessively waste potable water during Covid-19 shutdowns more power and control over your lives?

Any position in this State with that much power needs to be an elected position accountable to the public. Have some dignity and respect for the lives of your loved ones. Kill Senate Bill 321.

Sincerely,

Angel Lopez

*Providence, RI 02909*