

KINGSTON WATER DISTRICT

Mail to: P.O. Box 216, West Kingston, RI 02892

Tel. 401-783-5494

Office at: 14 Frank Ave., West Kingston, RI 02892

Fax 401-789-7004

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House Corporations Committee
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Sent Via Email: HouseCorporations@rilegislature.gov

RE: H7872 Opposition Letter

Honorable Chairman Solomon and Committee Members,

I am writing to respectfully express my opposition to the proposed amendments to Chapter 46-13 of the General Laws, specifically the addition of Section 46-13-23 concerning penalties for extended service interruptions. While I strongly support the goal of ensuring safe, reliable, and continuous access to public drinking water, I believe this legislation, as currently drafted, imposes unrealistic and potentially counterproductive requirements on public water suppliers. The mandate requiring restoration of service to at least 90% of affected customers within four hours of an unplanned outage does not adequately account for the complex and variable nature of water system failures. Infrastructure damage, weather conditions, equipment availability, and workforce constraints can all significantly impact restoration timelines. Even well-managed and responsive water systems may be unable to meet this rigid standard despite acting diligently and in good faith. The proposed financial penalties—\$250 per customer per hour, up to \$5,000 per customer per day—are excessively punitive and could impose severe financial strain on public water suppliers, particularly smaller or municipally operated systems. These costs may ultimately be passed on to ratepayers, placing an additional burden on residents rather than improving service reliability. Although the bill allows for waivers or adjustments by the Director of Health, the criteria for such relief are not clearly defined. This introduces uncertainty and may lead to inconsistent application, making it difficult for water providers to plan and operate effectively. Rather than focusing on punitive measures after service disruptions occur, I urge the Assembly to consider policies that proactively support infrastructure investment, system resilience, and emergency preparedness. Providing resources, technical assistance, and funding opportunities would more effectively strengthen water systems and reduce the likelihood and duration of outages. I respectfully request that the General Assembly reconsider or revise this legislation to ensure that it balances accountability with practicality and supports the long-term sustainability of public water systems. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christopher Champi

Manager

Kingston Water District