



Kent County Water Authority

April 6, 2026

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

SENT VIA EMAIL: HouseCorporations@rilegislature.gov

RE: H7872, An Act Relating to Waters and Navigation, Public Drinking Water Supply

Honorable Chairman Solomon and Committee Members:

The Kent County Water Authority (KCWA) opposes H7872, which would establish civil penalties for extended service interruptions by public drinking water suppliers. KCWA is a non-profit public benefit corporation that supplies drinking water to residents and businesses in West Warwick, Coventry, East Greenwich, West Greenwich, Scituate, North Kingstown, Warwick, and Cranston. We take service reliability seriously, and nobody at KCWA treats an outage lightly. Our opposition to this bill is straightforward. As written, it will not make water service any more reliable, and the cost of it will land entirely on our customers.

KCWA is already regulated by the Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC) under Title 39, and we operate under DPUC approved rules at 815-RICR-40-00-1. KCWA's own Rules and Regulations, filed with and approved by the DPUC as part of our tariff, already govern planned and unplanned interruptions, customer notice, and restoration. The DPUC already has the authority to investigate complaints and order corrective action where a utility has fallen short. H7872 would place a second penalty system in Title 46 on top of that existing Title 39 authority, which in practice means two forums and two standards for the same conduct.

Most water service interruptions are caused by events outside a utility's reasonable control, such as main breaks during a freeze, contamination response, precautionary shutdowns ordered by the Department of Health, planned outages for capital work, contractor damage to our lines, and loss of power during storms. H7872 does not carve any of that out. KCWA has no shareholders, so any civil penalty assessed under this bill would come directly out of the water bills of the families and businesses it is meant to protect.

KCWA opposes legislation that would duplicate existing DPUC authority and shift new costs onto our ratepayers without any corresponding improvement in service. Rhode Island already has a regulator, a complaint process, and penalty authority for water service issues, and those tools work. We strongly urge committee members to oppose the passage of H7872. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Simmons", written over a white background.

David L. Simmons P.E.
Executive Director/Chief Engineer