



**Association of Environmental
Authorities of New Jersey**

Thursday, July 8, 2021

AEA Continues to Raise Awareness about "Stealth Taxation" Bill

Dear E-News Readers:

I was one of three people who testified in person on S3637 at a recent Senate Budget Committee hearing. Former BPU President Jeanne Fox and I expressed opposition to the bill. In my testimony, I criticized the bill's expansion of Fair Market Value as a pro-privatization mechanism that inflates water/sewer system values and costs ratepayers steadily more over time. The committee's COVID guidelines limit in-person testimony and permit the submission of written testimony, but I wanted the committee members to see in-person testimony as an indication of how strongly AEA opposes S3637.

Please follow [this link](#) for a great article from Forbes about why S3637 proposes a "stealth tax" in the form of higher user fees for any government assets privatized under the scheme the bill proposes.

<https://apple.news/A9PU1krTVTMu1k6g4dAvmfg>

Learn More About How Private Water/Sewer Rates Compare with Public Rates

AEA is holding the first of two one-hour webinars on privatization on **Thursday,**

July 15 at 1 p.m. Speakers will include Prof. Mildred Warner of Cornell University. She will discuss her recent paper reporting the results of a study of the rates of 500 water systems in the U.S. She has also studied the "remunicipalization" efforts in Missoula, Montana. Attorney Mary Grant will discuss national trends in privatization.

The webinar is **FREE** and the webinar is being submitted for approval of **W/WW TCHs**.

A second one-hour webinar will be held on **Thursday, July 29** at 3 p.m. It will feature two speakers from the think tank In The Public Interest. Donald Cohen and Shahrzad Habibi will discuss their study of water privatization on the national level and parallel trends in the electricity sector. Cohen is the author of *Dismantling Democracy: The forty-year attack on government, ... and the long game for the common good*.

To register for one or both webinars, please email Karen Burris, karen@aeanj.org and indicate whether you will attend one webinar (and if so which one) or both webinars. Please indicate Privatization Webinars in the subject line. We will send you the meeting link(s) the day before and again on the morning of the webinar.

Biobot Seeks Participation in Wastewater Surveillance at No Charge to System

Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission is participating with Biobot in a wastewater surveillance study. Additional systems are sought to participate. Participation is free. For more information, contact at Biobot's Lauren Galinsky at support@biobot.io.

AEA Seeking Presentation Proposals for Upcoming Annual Meeting & Conference

AEA is seeking presentation proposals for its upcoming **Annual Meeting & Conference**.

The conference is set for **Nov. 16 & 17, 2021** at **Caesars Atlantic City**.

Plans are being made for a return to our in-person annual meeting & conference, to be held at Caesars in Atlantic City. The Onward & Upward theme continues as we conclude the celebration of our 50th anniversary. Registration information will be posted sometime in August.

We are **seeking proposals for presentations** to be made at the conference. Full details and submission forms are below:

Submission Deadline: August 6, 2021

AEA Announces New Protect NJ Public Water Website



AEA has developed a new website meant to provide information and resources regarding **water and sewer privatization**. The new website is protectNJpublicwater.com.

AEA is also launching a Facebook page, [protectSouthJerseypublicwater](https://www.facebook.com/protectSouthJerseypublicwater), and like the website, it is meant to be a resource regarding privatization. These platforms are becoming available as AEA, several public-sector unions, and other groups are opposing S3637. The bill would create a State-level trust fund that would take dedications of water, sewer and other local government assets. In return, the dedicating government units would earn credits on pension liabilities.

AEA views the bill as a "Trojan Horse" to privatization. **AEA urges its members to speak out against S3637** and urge legislators not to support the bill.

At the same time, Cumberland County UA is entertaining proposals to privatize. An RFQ CUA issued last month was generated mainly in response to overtures of Bernhard Capital Partners, a Louisiana private equity firm. Bernhard has been courting South Jersey officials in Cumberland County, Millville and possibly other locations, attempting to market its concession approach to privatizing. CUA commissioners are divided about the Bernhard proposal. Steve Errickson, CUA executive director, last week announced his resignation, saying the incursion of outside forces has harmed his ability to do his job.

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