

<b>Act Number:</b>	09-032	
<b>Bill Number:</b>	5792	
<b>Senate Pages:</b>	1953-1960	<b>8</b>
<b>House Pages:</b>	1172-1186	<b>15</b>
<b>Committee:</b>	General Law: 62-69, 321-323	<b>11</b>

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**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
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The ayes have it, the amendment passes.

Senator Crisco.

SENATOR CRISCO:

Thank you, Mr. President. I explained basically what the -- what the bill proposes to do and if there's no objection, I ask that it be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

There's a motion to place the item on Consent, is there any further discussion on the bill as amended?

If not, it will be placed on the Consent Calendar.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Calendar page 4, Calendar Number 239, File Number 99, Substitute for House Bill 5792, An Act Concerning Efficiency Standards for Residential Automatic Lawn Sprinkler Systems, favorable report of the Committee on General Law. Clerk is in possession of an amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Colapietro.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO:

Thank you, Mr. President. I move the Joint

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Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Acting on approval of the bill, sir, will you remark further?

SENATOR COLAPIETRO:

Thank you, Mr. President. This bill simply requires a lawn sprinkler that is installed after July 1, 2010, to be equipped with a rain sensor and a device that automatically overrides the system when enough rainfall has occurred.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on House Bill 5792?

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President. Just a quick question through you to the proponent. Mr. President, through you, would this result -- and I'm not familiar with sprinkler technology -- but would this result in a large number of sprinklers that are being sold on the market today not being able to be purchased by people in Connecticut or do most sprinklers already have this technology in it.

Through you Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Colapietro.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO:

Through you, Mr. President. Thank you, Mr. President and thank you for the question. As far -- we have had testimony that they already have the sprinklers available, the state is already required to purchase these sprinklers and install them. And all they are is the pop-up sprinklers, not the sprinklers overhead.

Through you, Mr. President.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

So through you Mr. President --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you and I thank the Senator for that answer. Through you, then the question I would have is for those pop-up sprinklers, are all the models that are in the market today, do they already have this technology or are we saying that, you know, basically 90 percent of the sprinkler systems out there that are new, because I understand they're new in this, but would -- people would not be able to buy

those anymore? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Colapietro.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO:

Through you Mr. President, as the bill explains, it's only after July 1, 2010 you have to purchase them. The technology is already there, because they're already installed in state agencies. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President. I thank Senator Colapietro for that answer. The question I would have then -- and so this bill, as I read it, doesn't just apply to state agencies, it applies to consumers as well. And if it applies to consumers as well, is it going to force consumers to say, geez, 90 percent of the sprinkler systems that are out there right now, I can't buy. Or is this just -- is this impact of this going to be -- there's only 10 percent of the old sprinkler system that doesn't really work. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

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Senator Colapietro.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO:

Through you, Mr. President, no, there wouldn't be -- they could buy them, because they are available. They are -- the technology is there, has been there, and the state agencies are already required to use them. So through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator DeBicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President. And I thank Senator Colapietro for the answers to those questions.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS:

Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in support of the bill. In addition to the comments from Senator Colapietro, they currently require state agencies, but all commercial establishments now are required to have the automatic shutoff of the sprinkler system, so this just wants to conform the law so everybody that installs a sprinkler system is going to have an

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automatic shut off. We heard testimony in the Public Health Committee, that's approximately an additional \$75 cost to the entire system, but the money that you'll save from the conservation of water and the electricity for running your system over time will -- will pay for itself, so I urge the chamber's adoption. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark? Will you remark further on House Bill 5792?

Senator Colapietro.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO:

Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you for the fine explanation of what I should have explained, Senator Witkos, and if there's no further discussion, I would move this item to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

There is a motion on the floor to place the item on Consent.

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Hi. How are you?

THE CHAIR:

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Oh, you want to talk, okay. (Inaudible).

(Inaudible) will (inaudible) be on Consent.

Will you remark further?

If not, Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate, will all Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate, will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gomes, would you like to vote on this?  
Thank you, sir.

Have all members voted? If all members have voted, please check your vote. The machine will be locked, the Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on House Bill passage of House Bill  
5792:

Total Number Voting	36
Necessary for Adoption	19
Those Voting Yea	29
Those Voting Nay	7

ch/rgd/md  
SENATE

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Those Absent/Not Voting 0

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Calendar page 10, Calendar Number 466, File Number 681, Senate Bill Number 1028, An Act Confirming and Adopting Volumes 1 to 13, Inclusive, of the General Statutes, Revised to 2009, and Considering Statutory References, favorable report of the Committee on Judiciary.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McDonald.

SENATOR MCDONALD:

Thank you, Mr. President. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Acting on approval and passage of the bill, sir, would you like to remark further?

SENATOR MCDONALD:

Yes, Mr. President. Mr. President, the first portion of this bill is one that we normally adopt every couple of years confirming and ratifying the

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**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

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REP. LAMBERT (118th):

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Good afternoon, ma'am. Please proceed.

REP. LAMBERT (118th): Point of personal privilege, please. I'd like to recognize Justin Rosen, who is my replacement as an alderman. And he is the youngest alderman that Milford has ever had. And we'd like to congratulate him in his new position. And of course, he's here to ask for any monies we can send back to Milford. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you madam. Please join in welcoming him. Welcome to the House of Representatives. Mr. Clerk, we'll return to the call of the calendar. Please call Calendar Number 129.

THE CLERK:

On page 9, Calendar Number 129, substitute for  
House Bill 5792, AN ACT CONCERNING EFFICIENCY  
STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL AUTOMATIC LAWN SPRINKLER  
SYSTEMS, favorable report of the Committee on General  
Law.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The distinguished Chairman of the General Law

Committee, Representative Shapiro.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Question is on passage. Will you explain the bill please, sir.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is simple. No one wants to see sprinklers going on in the rain. This is very easy. We already have procedures for this with respect to state agency property and commercial property. We require that any new sprinkler system that's put in have a valve so that it can monitor whether it's too much rainfall and then it can automatically shut off.

This is the low hanging fruit of environmentalism. This bill wouldn't make it apply to the residential people until July 1 of 2010. It's a very simple fix. The industry is ready for it. It would cost an additional \$75 on systems that begin at \$1500 or more. And therefore, this is not a significant cost. And anyone who can put in one of

these systems can foot it. And as I said, this is a very easy way to be green. I think it's a terrific bill. I thank Representative Fontana for proposing it, and I urge passage.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. Speaking of which, the gentlemen from North Haven, Representative Fontana.

REP. FONTANA (87th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support the bill. I thank Representative Shapiro for his leadership on committee. It is low-hanging fruit. It is good for the environment, and the technology is out there. We're not inventing the wheel or reinventing the wheel. We're simply applying it to residential systems. The same technology that we already apply to commercial/industrial systems. I urge my colleagues to support it. Thank you very much.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. The gentlewoman from Bolton, Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the proponent of the bill, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Representative Shapiro, you said that it cost \$70, 70 additional dollars to have this included in a package for new, and I repeat that, I presume new systems. Was there discussion about existing systems? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Shapiro, do you care to respond?

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, madam. What you refer to with new systems is correct. This would be prospective -- only systems installed on or after July 1 of 2010. There was discussion about existing systems, and they are grandfathered. They are not required to get this sensor in any way. They can continue business as usual. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Could you please point out the language then, that where it says that they are grandfathered? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Shapiro.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. The clear language of the bill says that it only applies to systems that are installed on or after July 1, 2010, thus excluding anything that was initiated prior thereto. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

I thank the gentleman for his answer, but that leads me then right into the next question. And that is in the case where you have an existing system and it has failed. Is that considered a new system, or is that considered grandfathered? Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Shapiro.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. We've had a four-year history of this with the commercial requirement already in place and the requirement on state agencies. The DCP has handled this quite thoroughly and effectively over the years. And their standard

for installation would not relate to repair or maintenance, but if there was a complete removal and new installation, then it would apply. So the new one would have to have the \$75 additional sensor, but if it was just maintenance or repair, then it wouldn't have to have that. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

I want to thank the gentleman for the clarifications on -- and the answers to that. But I'd like to take the discussion another step further. Ladies and gentlemen, we have 70 days left in this session and we're standing here talking about whether or not to mandate that a homeowner that is putting in sprinklers, to put in a sensor for adequate rainfall. Do we go the next step farther and do we count the night crawlers that come up? And do we decide what kind of damage that that would do?

Mr. Speaker, I get very frustrated when I see language that comes across that infringes on people's decision on what they're going to buy, what they're not going to buy, what additions they have to have and what additions they don't have to have. And then we

use words like adequate. That doesn't tell us how much rainfall it is -- how much rainfall it isn't.

Mr. Speaker, we have a very short amount of time between now and the end of session. And we have a bill in front of us about water sprinklers, about residential water sprinklers. You know, it's one thing if we're going to talk about the state, and if you look at the language, in 19 -- in 2003, we mandated municipalities to do it. I think, Mr. Speaker, we're getting to that point where there's a frustration. We have some major issues before us. We have some major budgetary issues before us, and we should be meeting and we should be talking about those issues, and we're here today talking about sprinklers for residences. And we're talking about new sprinklers, and we're talking about forward, and this doesn't have to go -- happen until 2010.

I want to thank the Chamber for listening to me bring up other issues. And Mr. Speaker, I will stay on point on this particular bill before I get chastised by the Chair. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed. I am opposed to telling homeowners what bits they have to put onto their home sprinklers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam. The gentleman from North Haven, Representative Candelora. I'm sorry North Branford. Bad eyes.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Close enough. If I may, I just have couple questions.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, the bill does reference the term "adequate rainfall," that is the triggering mechanism for these sensors. Where do we find the definition of adequate rainfall? Who would determine that? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Shapiro.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the gentleman for his question. It is a good one. As it has been handled throughout the process with the state agencies and the commercial properties, adequate rainfall is determined by the sensor itself, which can be set by, in this case, the homeowner. There is a sliding scale

from less rain to more rain, and that is within the purview of the owner of the system. So it would not be us mandating what adequate rainfall it is. It would be the homeowner, him or herself, determining how they wanted to set the sensor that they want to own. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, so then an individual that has this device could determine that they would need two inches of rain per day in order to adequately irrigate their lawn, therefore the sensor would only be triggered if they receive -- if the lawn received more than two inches of rain. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Shapiro.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and through you, I don't know the variation on every sensor that's out there and what the maximum and minimum is on each of them. But yes, I could foresee that some people would require more rain, or a higher setting, and some, a

lower. But I think we can all agree that most people don't want their sprinklers on when it's raining. And so I think people would use good judgment under the circumstances. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you. And one final question. I've heard that this bill applies prospectively only. In my experience, a lot of these irrigation systems, especially the sprinkler heads, quite frequently get clogged with dirt and need to be replaced on a fairly regular basis. Through you, Mr. Speaker, in those situations where lawn systems need to be repaired, would they, would the homeowners then be subject to the provisions of this statute? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Shapiro.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you. It has not been the policy of DCP during the commercial program and the state agency program to require new heads, to require sensors on just a replacement or a

repair. As you were describing, only on an entire system replacement, and it is our intention that that would continue to be the case and that repairs would not require -- would not trigger this section.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, Mr. Speaker, are these devices contained within the heads, then, of the sprinkler system, or is it a device that, you know, is found at just at a certain point in the sprinkler system to trigger it, or does each head, is each head equipped with such sensor? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Shapiro.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. There are variances but, in general the predominant way is one sensor at a particular point by a particular sprinkler head.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I think those were all my questions. I guess, while I appreciate the intent of this legislation, I question what savings we'd actually be obtaining for water conservation if the homeowners themselves are determining what level of rain would actually be appropriate. I tend to think that this legislation is a bit unnecessary, and I'm not inclined to support it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. The gentleman from Terryville, Representative Hamzy.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple questions posed to the proponent.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I read existing -- our existing statute, it appears that municipalities are allowed to pass by ordinance restrictions on sprinkler systems. Is that with regard to sprinkler systems that are installed on municipal grounds, or is

that in -- on any property within the boundaries of that municipality? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Shapiro.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Thank you, and through you, Mr. Speaker. To be honest, it appears unclear. And I understand your question. I'm not sure of the intent of this when it was passed three years ago, whether it was intended to only be municipal property or any property within the municipality. The plain language seems to apply to any property within a municipality. And if your follow-up question is, are we then superseding the ability of the municipalities to do that, the answer is yes. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Hamzy.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

And that was my next question. If we are superseding the existing statute, why wasn't that section or subsection just struck? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Shapiro.

REP. SHAPIRO (144th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And perhaps I wasn't clear enough. We would be superseding the existing statute with respect to residential properties, but the way it's drafted currently, they -- municipalities would still be able to determine whether they wanted to put it on their own property. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Hamzy.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Okay. And -- okay. I understand the answers, and I thank him for his -- for those answers. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. Remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill? If not, staff and guests, please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

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Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? If so, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will take a tally. And the Clerk will announce the tally?

THE CLERK:

House Bill Number 5792.

Total Number Voting	139
Necessary for Passage	70
Those voting Yea	103
Those voting Nay	35
Those absent and not voting	12

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The bill is passed. Mr. Clerk, please call Calendar Number 95.

THE CLERK:

On page 6, Calendar 95, House Bill Number 5177, AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYERS AND NOTICE OF AVAILABLE FEDERAL EARNED INCOME TAX CREDITS, favorable report of the Committee on Labor and Public Employees.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

I call on the distinguished Dean of the House of Representatives, Representative Mary Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move acceptance of the .

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SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Thank you, Lou, and thank you, Abby, and your representative, your salesperson over there.

ABBY JEWETT: Amy. Thank you.

May I ask if Senator Witkos had any luck?

(Inaudible.)

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Thank you.

ABBY JEWETT: Thank you.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Thank you for your testimony. With that I'll call Dick Tice.

DICK TICE: I have two other members of my association with me. Is it all right if they come up with me to handle questions from you?

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: As long as they can do it in three minutes, sure.

DICK TICE: Okay. Good afternoon, Senator Colapietro, Representative Shapiro and members of the general law committee. My name is Dick Tice, and I am here to testify on behalf of the Connecticut Irrigation Contractors Association. Here with me today is Curtis Anderson, Dave Feinenberg and Tom Marmelstein, who are all on the board of directors of that association, and we are here to speak in support of HB 5792, An Act Concerning Efficiency Standards for Automatic Lawn Sprinklers. We would respectfully request that this legislation be amended with the language that is attached to our testimony.

The sponsor of this legislation, Representative Fontana, has reviewed this

language and would support its attachment to his legislation.

Since 2003, all commercial and state agency properties installing an automatic lawn sprinkler system must equip this system with a rain sensor device that will override the irrigation cycle when adequate rainfall has occurred. In addition to current law, municipalities have the option to adopt a local ordinance that would require rain sensors on all municipal properties and many municipalities have availed themselves of this statute.

Our proposed amendment would simply require that rain sensors be equipped on residential installations. By requiring these devices to be installed on residential properties, it would save the consumer thousands of dollars over the life of the irrigation system by not using water during rain events. In addition, this rain amendment would conserve our precious water supply by preventing unnecessary irrigation.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify, and we would be pleased to answer any questions.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: I just have -- I have a question. Why -- why are you exempting certain people? You say that the municipalities are optional, and the state has to be mandated and residential has to be mandated. Why municipalities are an option?

DICK TICE: Actually, we're not -- we're not excluding anybody. Right now the state law says that state -- state buildings and commercial properties must have this installed.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Right.

DICK TICE: Towns have the option, obviously, of opting not to have it on a municipal property, and we would like to have it required on residential properties.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Would it be all right to say it's required if you have this system?

DICK TICE: Oh, yes.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Some don't have the system.

DICK TICE: Correct.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: And yet sometimes it's raining and the system is working.

DICK TICE: That's -- and that's what we want to prevent. This rain sensor would stop the irrigation from coming on --

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Right, I understand that.

DICK TICE: -- if it was raining.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: I think it's a great idea. I'm just saying why are you exempting anybody, or even we should make it a mandate all the way across the state rather than just say you don't have to do it, municipalities are optional. You know, if you have the system, you should have a sensor.

DICK TICE: Well, what we were getting at is that the current law gives the municipalities the option of doing it --

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Right.

DICK TICE: -- to their properties, but --

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: This bill changes all that.

DICK TICE: -- it's fairly obvious anyway.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Yes. And many times when we talk about these bills, the reason we have public hearings is because sometimes the bills don't say the right thing, and we fix it or we try to. So thank you.

Any questions?

REP. SHAPIRO: Thank you for your testimony. Can you tell me what the price differential is between a sprinkler system with the sensor and one without?

DICK TICE: I'm going to defer that question to one of the contractors over here.

TOM MARMELSTEIN: Hi. My name is Tom Marmelstein. I'm a sales manager for Hunter Industries, which is one of the premier manufacturers in the business.

The cost is very minimal. A hard-wired rain sensor cost is \$35, and with installation it's usually around \$75 to the homeowner.

And as far as water savings, it really depends on how much rainfall happens each year, but, again, over the -- over the life of the system, thousands -- thousands of dollars, anyways, off their bill and many more times that gallons of water saved.

REP. SHAPIRO: And is there a difference between the systems used in commercial properties and those used in residential properties?

TOM MARMELSTEIN: The only difference would be probably a more -- more cost savings because they do use a lot more water, so that, you know, Mrs. Jones' house might have 12 zones of irrigation where a commercial property could have 50 zones of irrigation.

REP. SHAPIRO: Okay. Thank you. I would ask you two gentlemen to sign in with the clerk when -- when we let you go, but I think there are other questions. Representative D'Amelio.

REP. D'AMELIO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just a follow-up on what Representative Shapiro is saying. The same rain sensor can take care of a residential home and a commercial establishment? I mean, you don't need to put more in a commercial if it's a bigger system?

TOM MARMELSTEIN: Well, it all depends. In -- in simple terms, the rain sensor will connect to the irrigation controller, okay, and some systems have more than one controller, but -- but the controllers can usually go up to 40 to 50 zones of irrigation. So if it were a case where on a commercial site where there's ten controllers, they would have to probably utilize more rain sensors. But their savings on a site like that would far outweigh the cost of the rain sensor.

REP. D'AMELIO: Is this explained to the homeowners or, you know, people purchasing irrigation systems that these rain sensors should be put in because you can potentially save thousands of dollars and conserve water?

CURTIS ANDERSON: Yes, I'm Curtis Anderson, Anderson Turf Irrigation and president of the Connecticut Irrigation Contractors

Association.

And, yes, we do promote it on a regular basis to all our installations. Although the law is stated that with commercial properties and municipalities having that enacted rain sensor, as of yet residential does not have it, so we do promote it every time we do an installation, and I would say it does get installed, but to have it on the books is -- would be a good -- a good thing, a good water saving technique.

REP. D'AMELIO: Thank you.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Thank you, Representative D'Amelio.

I just wanted to ask quickly, if I may. Do you -- how many people have this already, this rain sensor system, consumers that are just homeowners, not commercial? Do you have any idea?

TOM MARMELSTEIN: I have ten years experience in the industry. I can only estimate that out of the residences in Connecticut, I would have to say it's probably somewhere between 50 and 60 percent have a rain sensor on their system that have irrigation. It's very -- very tough to justify. Most homeowners realize that -- they don't want to see their irrigation running in the rain either, so for most installations it's a no-brainer and people just put it on.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Right. So when you install these sensors, does an electrician do it or plumber or do you do it on your own or what? Do you have to be licensed?

TOM MARMELSTEIN: It's done by the irrigation contractor, and it simply wires back into the

irrigation controller. Very simple device. It's two wires, and it's just like a switch. There's two sensor terminals, and when moisture hits the sensor, the switch closes, which stops the controller from -- from sending voltage to the valves that run the irrigation system.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Representative Reed, I believe you had a question?

REP. REED: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just interested. The \$75 that you quoted, is that also the cost to retrofit an existing system?

TOM MARMELSTEIN: Yes, there are some situations where depending on where a controller is located, but I would say on average that would be a good number to use.

REP. REED: And just one more. What would be the disincentive? Are there people who just like a good soaking no matter what?

TOM MARMELSTEIN: You know, we've been working on this for probably four years now, and to me there's no disincentive. I mean, it's -- you know, water, although this isn't -- this isn't Arizona where water is much more of a commodity, we still as an industry want to be proactive and save as much as we possibly can. So I think most installations that go in in not only Connecticut but anywhere that has irrigation utilize some type of rain sensor device.

REP. REED: Thank you.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: What I think -- I think you can turn it off anytime you want. If you want to stay home and watch it and make sure if it's raining you can turn it off, and if it's

not, you just -- you have to maintain it, I guess, right?

TOM MARMELESTEIN: There is an override switch on the front of the controller, so if that's what you want to do, you can do it.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Right, and if you don't want to have one, you could -- what I'm trying to say is you can just, I'm going out at 3:00, I'm going to run it from 3, and I'm coming home at 4, so I'm going to run it from 3 to 4 and then I'm going to shut it off when I get home instead of having a sensor. I understand.

Anybody else have any questions?  
Representative Esposito.

REP. ESPOSITO: Just a clarification. On the switch itself, you said the sensor will feel the rain and open or close the switch so that the controller will not allow the valve to open. What if the system is operating and it starts to rain? Does it do the same thing? Does it shut it down or does it go through the cycle?

TOM MARMELESTEIN: Yes, depending -- there are several types of rain sensors, but -- but the most common one will shut down in approximately five to ten minutes. Some -- some will shut down a little sooner, and that gets into the device itself, but on average an eighth of an inch of water or less will shut the device down.

SENATOR COLAPIETRO: Thank you, Representative Esposito. Anybody else have any questions? Well, thank you for your testimony, gentlemen.

DICK TICE: Thank you, sir.

# Connecticut Irrigation Contractors Association

Testimony of  
Curtis Anderson  
Tom Marmelstein  
Dave Pijenberg

In Support of  
**Proposed House Bill No. 5792, An Act Concerning Efficiency Standards for Automatic Lawn Sprinklers**

General Assembly's General Law Committee  
February 5, 2009

Good afternoon Senator Colapietro, Rep. Shapiro and members of the General Law Committee, my name is Tom Marmelstein and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Irrigation Contractors Association. Here with me today is Curtis Anderson and Dave Pijenberg. We are here to support HB 5792, An Act Concerning Efficiency Standards for Automatic Lawn Sprinklers. We would respectfully request that this legislation be amended with language that's attached to our testimony. The sponsor of this legislation, Rep. Fontana, has reviewed this language and would support its attachment to this legislation.

Since 2003 all commercial and state agency properties installing an automatic lawn sprinkler system most equip the system with a rain sensor device that will override the irrigation cycle when adequate rainfall has occurred. In addition under current law, municipalities have the option to adopt a local ordinance that would require rain sensors on all municipal properties. Many municipalities have availed themselves of this statute.

Our proposed amendment would simply require that rain sensors be equipped on residential installation. By requiring these devices to be installed on residential properties it would save the consumer thousands of dollars over the life of their irrigation system by not using water during rain events. In addition, this amendment would conserve our precious water supply by preventing unnecessary irrigation.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, we would be pleased to answer any questions.

# Connecticut Irrigation Contractors Association

**Sec. 29-265b. Rain sensor devices for automatic lawn sprinkler systems. (*Effective October 1, 2009*)**

(a) Any state agency or commercial enterprise that begins installation of an automatic lawn sprinkler system on or after October 1, 2003, shall equip such sprinkler system with a rain sensor device or switch that will automatically override the irrigation cycle of such sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred.

(b) A municipality may, by ordinance adopted by its legislative body, require that any automatic lawn sprinkler system, the installation of which begins on or after October 1, 2003, shall be equipped with a rain sensor device or switch that will automatically override the irrigation cycle of such sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred.

(c) Any residential property that begins installation of an automatic lawn sprinkler system on or after October 1, 2009, shall equip sprinkler system with a rain sensor device or switch that will automatically override the irrigation cycle of such sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred.

(P.A. 03-175, S. 2.)



**TESTIMONY  
CONNECTICUT WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION  
BEFORE THE  
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 5, 2009**

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) *supports HB-5792, An Act Concerning Efficiency Standards for Automatic Lawn Sprinklers.*

This bill promotes water conservation by requiring automatic lawn sprinklers to be equipped with moisture sensor detectors. Water conservation is a critical tool in improving the efficiency of water use and in responding to droughts and service disruptions. Due to increasing demands on Connecticut's water supplies and costs and difficulties associated with developing new supplies, we must take steps to implement common sense conservation measures.

In Connecticut, seasonal peak demands can more than double mainly as a result of automatic sprinklers, lawn irrigation, and other outdoor water use. A typical lawn sprinkler will use as much water in one hour as any in-home appliance uses in an entire day. Requiring automatic lawn sprinklers to be equipped with rain or moisture sensor detectors will significantly reduce unnecessary and wasteful water usage.

We therefore urge lawmakers to adopt this legislation. Thank you.

*The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWWA) is an association of public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut. Membership in the Association is open to all Connecticut water utilities: investor-owned, municipal and regional authorities. CWWA is committed to working with the state to develop policies that will ensure that Connecticut has a safe, ample supply of water to meet present and future needs.*