The Water R

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The time has come to make the best of a bad situation. Connecticut state law requires filtration for all public water supplies. No exceptions, period. The law offers no other method to achieve the safe drinking water standards. Challenging the state mandate to filter water would require time, money and the full and resolute determination of citizens and the town government, and there is no assurance as to outcome. It is a real dilemma.

Another path can be followed. We can obtain the most funding possible from the federal government, build a water filtration facility, and do what is really necessary: repair and upgrade the water distribution system. If approved, the February 3, 1996 referendum provides us with additional money and an opportunity to do both. **Most important, we have assurance from the federal government that any money not used on the filtration facility can be used to upgrade the distribution system.**

The federal government has agreed to provide $6. 5 million in loans and grants and more recently, an additional $1.7 million in loans and grants. The February 3, 1996 referendum raises the spending limit to $8,287,500, which includes the $6.5 million award plus an additional $1.7 million. The remaining $87,500 in the spending package gives us some wiggle room to apply for this much more, if we need it. We can receive the $8,287,500 only if the February 3, 1996 referendum is approved, because the federal government can award money only up to the amount approved by voters.

WHAT ABOUT THE OCTOBER 1993 REFERENDUM?

In October 1993, voters approved spending $6. 5 million for a filtration facility and the federal government is providing all of this amount. But the 1993 referendum requires a $5 million grant commitment before we can start the project. We are $632,300 short of that requirement and ineligible, by federal formula, for more grant share (see box). Because of this limitation, we can not act on the October 1993 referendum.

WHY $8,287,500?

The engineers estimate that a filtration facility will cost more than $6. 5 million. Since state law requires us to build a filtration facility, the additional money permits us to build the facility and upgrade our distribution system. Water from your tap is only as good as the pipes it travels through. Water flowing through old, crusty pipes - no matter how big the plant or how much we filter it - does not deliver quality water to your tap. Also, upgrades are needed to