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Rep. Shusterman Statement Regarding Requesting a Legislative Moratorium on Act 12 Section 1329 Public Sewer Sales

Over the past few months, I have heard from many Willistown residents who are affected by the recent sale of the Willistown sewer system to AQUA. This sale will result in Willistown residents paying steeply increased rates. While I certainly support the Willistown Board of Supervisors' power to make this decision, two issues concerning the way the Public Utilities Commission handles these sales have been brought to my attention.

As it is currently written, ACT 12 Section 1329 allows the Public Utilities Commission to approve sales of public sewer systems, even against the recommendation of the Public Utility Commission Administrative Law Judge. This process is severely impacting our residents.

As a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, I believe there is action we can take as a body to make sure these sales are not done against the good of the public. That is why I am calling on Speaker Cutler, Leader Benninghoff, and the majority party leadership to bring forward a moratorium on Act 12 Section 1329 public utility purchases. This moratorium will halt all pending sales, while the House of Representatives can hold hearings to learn about the impacts of this legislation. This is a necessary action to make sure we are enacting legislation that benefits our constituents.

Furthermore, I am calling on the Majority Leadership to work with Governor Wolf to fill the two vacant positions on the Public Utilities Commission. This Commission is tasked with making extremely important decisions that affect our constituents' wallets as well as the environment. The PUC should be at full capacity to ensure that decisions that result in grave consequences for our residents are treated with the utmost regard.

Finally, I ask that House Bill 144, the Water Rate Payers Bill of Rights, be brought to the floor for a vote. This bill will allow our constituents who are affected by water system sales to have a further say in this process.

As members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, it is imperative that we take these actions so that we can best serve our constituents.