



2018 Government Affairs Agenda

IMPLEMENTING CONNECTICUT'S STATE WATER PLAN

Connecticut's water companies are responsible for providing safe, reliable water to meet the public health, safety and economic development needs of residents and businesses. To ensure the continued availability of safe, adequate public water supplies, CWNA supports a State Water Plan that includes the following elements:

- Protects the availability and quality of public water supplies to meet the existing and future public health, safety, and economic development needs of customers and communities throughout the state;
- Collaborative, consensus-based implementation of Plan recommendations that are appropriately balanced and consider the ecological, environmental, public health and safety and economic implications of any recommended policy and regulatory changes;
- Relies on objective data and scientific methodologies and decision-making, identifies data gaps and feasible approaches for obtaining needed data;
- Facilitates the use of interconnections and regional solutions to enhance resiliency of water systems and support local economic development needs;
- Preserves the continued use of registered and permitted diversions, recognizing that water companies have made long term investment and planning decisions based upon the availability of registered and permitted diversions to meet existing and future needs of customers and communities;
- Addresses how reservoir releases under the state's Stream Flow regulations may adversely impact the availability of public water supplies;
- Considers how climate change may impact public water supplies;
- Identifies equitable, broad-based funding mechanisms to ensure there are adequate resources to support and implement the State Water Plan.

Improve Drought Response

- Strengthen mechanisms for enforcing water use restrictions during periods of drought and other water supply emergencies;
- Work with Department of Public Health (DPH) to assess the adequacy of triggers and responses based on system specific information; and
- Ensure that water utilities continue to retain responsibility for conducting technical analyses necessary to set appropriate water system specific triggers.

Promote Water Conservation Ethic

- Continue to support efforts to promote water conservation practices, such as water audits, leak detection, smart meters, low flow faucets, showerheads and toilets, and rain sensors on irrigation equipment;
- Ensure ratemaking policies and practices for all water utilities to avoid adverse financial impacts if conservation reduces water usage; and
- Enhance public education and other programs to promote a stronger conservation ethic among consumers, communities, and state agencies.

Support Energy Efficiency Measures

- Authorize private and regional water companies to utilize virtual net metering (VNM) and increase the cap on VNM to assist water companies in reducing energy costs and consumption; and
- Ensure that Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) ratemaking policies support investments and operating expenses to support increased water and energy efficiency at water utilities.

Address Water Quality Issues

- Support efforts to encourage school systems to test and monitor for lead;
- Develop programs to assist consumers in identifying potential sources of lead in their homes, businesses, and institutional buildings (schools) and assist them in mitigating risks; and
- Develop strategies and funding to encourage the replacement of customer lead service lines.



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Address Small System Concerns

- Require greater accountability and compliance from small system operators to ensure quality of service for their customers;
- Streamline approval processes for acquisitions of small systems by viable water companies; and
- Consider funding mechanisms to support regional solutions or other programs for nonviable water systems that do not burden customers of company asked to acquire failing system.

Enhance Source Water Protection Efforts

- Support continued funding for the state's Open Space & Watershed Acquisition program;
- Retain the carry forward period for tax credits which has been a powerful incentive in protecting watershed lands from development;
- Endorse efforts to develop a plan to address invasive species issues; and
- Support adoption of programs that reduce the introduction of sodium in water supplies through best practices for state and local crews and private snow removal contractors.

Support Investment in Infrastructure

- Support continued investment in the state's Clean Water Fund;
- Revise the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) to authorize grants in addition to loans; and
- Review and revise the SRF application process to lessen the bureaucratic steps that provide minimal value to water utilities and the state.

DPH Accountability and Efficiency

- Ensure that revenues generated under the Primacy Assessment are used to support staffing needed to preserve DPH's primacy role;
- Develop a methodology for determining the Safe Drinking Water Primacy Assessment that limits future increases and ensures costs are equitably borne by all water companies, including transient and non-transient non-community water systems;

- Require DPH to account for how the Safe Drinking Water Primacy Assessment fees are used and steps taken to adopt more efficient regulatory processes to avoid significant cost burdens for water customers;
- Work with DPH to improve various regulatory programs and requirements, including:
 - overhauling the format for Water Supply Plans;
 - exempting routine/minor activities performed on water company lands from DPH's change of use permit;
 - developing a Licensed Water Professional program; and
 - streamlining various reporting requirements; and
- Modify the current sodium notification level, consistent with EPA guidance and medical science.

Address Cost and Operational Issues

- Promote legislation that provides for the preservation of corridors for the safe, accessible location of underground utilities;
- Adopt "Fair Value" legislation to allow municipalities to receive the fair market value of their utility assets and the private water company to pay and get recovery for that amount in a mutually agreed upon transaction;
- Allow water companies to impose late charges on unpaid bills after 28 days rather than one month, consistent with other private utilities; and
- Restore the sales tax exemption for private water companies to minimize disparities in water rates paid by customers and reduce administrative burdens associated with collecting the tax.