

CT's five Conservation Districts and the statewide CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation need your help to restore funding.

There is bi-partisan support for restoring funding for the CT Conservation Districts and the Council on Soil and Water; we are now included in Democratic and Republican versions of the budget. To ensure that we stay in the budget, *please contact your legislators; ask them to support funding the Districts and Council at \$300,000 for each biannual budget year, and let their caucus leaders know of their support. (www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp).*

Talking Points:

The Conservation Districts and CT Council on Soil and Water are state created entities mandated to assist the Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to identify and solve problems associated with soil and water conservation. We provide needed technical services to our municipalities, farmers and landowners on urban and rural lands, and protect and improve water quality through our statewide efforts. These relied-upon services include:

- ◆ Impartial technical expertise to municipal staff and land use commissions, which facilitates the local permitting process and prevents costly mishaps in the field, including failed erosion and sedimentation controls.
- ◆ Conservation planning and other technical assistance to farmers to enhance farm productivity and viability, conserve soil and protect water quality.
- ◆ Securing funding for/completing on-the ground restoration projects to protect water quality and other natural resources through improved management practices.

State funds are essential to our core operations and ability to provide needed technical services. We have received state base funding to support our operations for over 50 years, but this fiscal year our funding was eliminated.

Lack of State Base Funds:

- ◆ Reduces or delays our response to municipal requests for assistance
- ◆ Results in staff reductions
- ◆ Impedes our ability to deliver core technical services
- ◆ Limits office/phone access to information, appointments and technical assistance
- ◆ Hinders our ability to secure funds to complete natural resource protection projects

Connecticut cannot afford to lose the critical technical assistance for soil, water and other natural resource conservation related land use issues that we provide. The Conservation Districts and CT Council on Soil and Water fill a vital role supporting essential State and Federal conservation programs, and provide leadership and technical assistance for regional watershed-based programs.

The work that the Conservation Districts and Council on Soil and Water do is particularly important during this period of a declining state work force, and uncertainty about the future of federal resources that support natural resources protection in the state. The Council and Districts also have a proven track record of leveraging state base funding to secure additional federal, state, and private funds for projects that meet local community needs.

*A fact sheet is attached for background on CT's Conservation Districts, including contact information if you have questions. **Thank you for your help restoring funding!***