

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Connecticut State Water Plan
Public Hearing
April 17, 2018
Testimony of Connecticut Land Conservation Council
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Esq., Executive Director

To the Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Public Health Committee, Energy and Technology Committee, Environment Committee, and Planning and Development Committee:

As the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its 137+/- land trusts, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut. Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in support of the Connecticut State Water Plan (the Plan). CLCC respectfully urges you to approve the Plan as drafted without changes.

The Plan consolidates in one document information about the state's water resources, identifies key problems with existing water policy, and provides many of the proposed ideas for better management. The Plan offers consensus-based priorities related to, *inter alia*, drinking water, access to water data, improved water conservation measures, the preservation of the state's high quality drinking water, and -- of particular relevance to the mission of CLCC -- support for the "protection of Class I and II watershed lands, and expansion of protection of other watershed lands and land that feeds aquifers used for public water supply or by private wells."

In the Executive Summary, the Plan references that water is a public trust resource under existing state law. The public trust doctrine is particularly important to the protection of water resources which flow irrespective of political boundaries. That said, the inclusion of the doctrine in the Plan is limited to an acknowledgment of the statute, and its importance as an item for future discussion.

Years in the making, with significant investment of time and resources, and based upon input from dozens of stakeholders -- including members of the public -- the Plan is a good first step in providing necessary guidance on how the state regulates all water resources. Adopting a State Water Plan now is essential to make sure we can stay ahead of and hopefully forestall the water problems being experienced in many other states and nations around the world. Please approve the State Water Plan as presented.

On behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, I thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

