



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Recommendations for Legislation – Summary List

January 2012

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) reports the condition of Connecticut's air, water, land and life every year in *Environmental Quality in Connecticut*. The Council also is required by law (CGS Section 22a-12) to recommend legislation "for remedying the deficiencies of existing programs and activities."

From its review of statewide environmental indicators and its investigation of citizen complaints, the Council has identified important deficiencies and offers appropriate recommendations in the following categories:

- Farms, Fields and Forests
- Inland Wetlands
- Rivers & Sound
- Deficiencies in Current Laws: problems discovered in the course of investigating complaints

On November 16, 2011 the Council held a public forum at which residents were invited to comment on draft recommendations. The Council received hours of commentary as well as many written comments. Speakers' testimony is summarized on the Council's website. The Council made many adjustments as a result of what it heard at the forum.

Questions and comments are welcome at

Council on Environmental Quality
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106
860-424-4000
karl.wagener@ct.gov
www.ct.gov/ceq

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Please visit the Council's website for details of these proposals, including the need for each and a sampling of the public's testimony on the draft recommendations.

FARMS, FORESTS and FIELDS

- No-cost acquisitions: Direct state agencies to catalog unprotected state-owned lands that merit permanent conservation.
- Maintain current capital authorization for the Department of Agriculture's farmland preservation; annual target should be 2,000 acres.
- Authorize sufficient funds to preserve 12,000 acres per year of open space by DEEP and state grant recipients. This annual target includes the lands preserved at no cost to the state.
- Improve the state's strategy for conserving land, especially for wildlife habitat. Require DEEP to identify the highest priority lands in its 2012 revision of *The Green Plan*.
- Establish a registry of preserved lands built on voluntary reporting by municipalities and land trusts.

INLAND WETLANDS: TRAINING IS NEEDED

- Modify incentives for members and staff of municipal inland wetlands agencies to complete training. Improvements should include a requirement for all *new* members to complete "Basic Training," a new class of training that would be created by DEEP and would include an online training option. (See website for more recommendations.)

RIVERS AND SOUND

- Maintain the current capital budget for the Clean Water Fund to improve sewage treatment plants and separate storm sewers from sanitary sewers.
- Require DEEP to analyze statewide capital requirements to reduce pollution from runoff.

DEFICIENCIES IN CURRENT LAWS Conclusions of Investigations

- Overhaul and consolidate **remediation** programs to allow DEEP and landowners to move faster.
- Consolidate into one agency the programs that govern the provision of **potable water** to homeowners and communities with contaminated wells.
- All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)**: Improve law enforcement agencies' ability to enforce existing laws by 1) requiring registration and 2) including forfeiture of the vehicle as a potential penalty.
- Allow victims of **illegal tree cutting** to recover costs of replanting and restoration in court. This would extend to *all* landowners the remedies made available to *public* landowners in 2006.
- Outdoor Wood-Burning Furnaces (OWFs)**: 1) Enact a moratorium until DEEP adopts regulations that establish maximum emission levels. 2) Require DEEP to adopt such regulations by 2014. 3) Authorize DEEP to enforce the statute and regulations through administrative action. 4) Clarify ambiguous aspects of the statute, including the point of a residence from which distances are measured, and the obligation for *all* OWFs to burn clean wood only. 5) Clarify the authority of local building and health officials to regulate OWFs, and allow municipalities to collect and retain penalties.