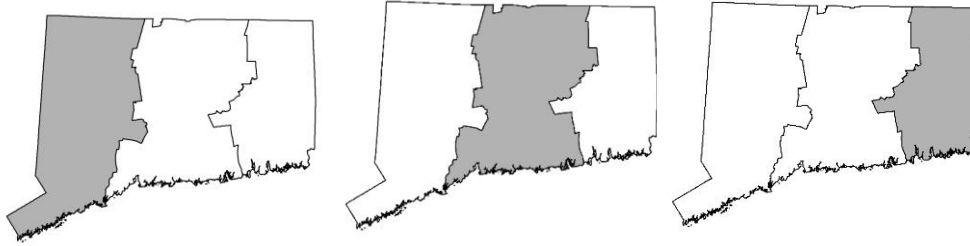


# Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committees



January 12, 2017

## Members of the Public

This letter is in response to written communications received from the public regarding the Coordinated Water System Planning process in the Western, Central, and Eastern Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) regions.

The coordinated water system planning process began in June of 2016. The plans developed by each WUCC will consist of: (1) the individual water system plans of each public water system in the region; and (2) an Areawide Supplement, which includes the Water Supply Assessment, Exclusive Service Area Boundaries; Integrated Report; and Executive Summary. Respectively, these components must be completed within 6, 12, 24, and 24 months following convening of each WUCC.

To date, water supply assessments have been prepared for each region and the exclusive service area delineation process is underway. The final Water Supply Assessment reports were submitted to the Department of Public Health in December 2016; preliminary and final exclusive service area delineations and reporting will be published in March and June of 2017 respectively; and the integrated reports and executive summaries for the three regions will be published in June of 2018, thus concluding the two-year planning process.

A substantial amount of public comment has been received to date. The letters convey the following common themes:

- Prioritize environmental protection.
- Ensure the quality and quantity of drinking water is not compromised.
- Keep Connecticut's water in public trust.
- Require water conservation.
- Develop a regional water planning strategy.
- Prioritize the need for clean drinking water over corporate interests.
- Provide ample opportunity for public comment.

To the extent that comments received specifically pertained to one or more of the Water Supply Assessments, they were considered and addressed in the final documents. The following responses are intended to address the broader issues raised.

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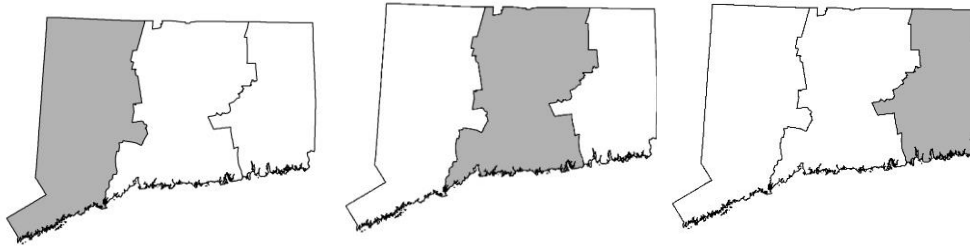
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*Prioritize Environmental Protection* – Members of environmental groups and the public have voiced concern over the potential for environmental impact related to water withdrawals from reservoirs and groundwater aquifers. Environmental protection of watersheds and aquifers is important to ensure high quality drinking water and is a shared goal by water suppliers throughout the state. Source protection programs are in place for small and large public water systems and various environmental laws and regulations are in place for the protection of drinking water supplies. For new water withdrawals, and for those previously permitted under the Water Diversion Act administered by the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), potential environmental impacts are rigorously reviewed. Previously registered water diversions, including those for public drinking water supply, did not undergo environmental review, as these withdrawals are grandfathered. The Integrated Report will consider potential impacts of the Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP) on other uses of water resources, including water quality, flood management, recreation, hydropower, and aquatic habitat issues.

*Ensure the Quality and Quantity of Drinking Water is not Compromised* – The WUCC regions recognize the importance of ensuring adequate quality and quantity of drinking water. Each provider of public water in Connecticut is required to meet public health standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH). Responsibilities borne by public water systems include source water protection, water treatment, water quality monitoring, and rigorous reporting requirements. DPH, DEEP, and EPA regulate and enforce the standards for water quality and quantity protection, use, conservation, and distribution.

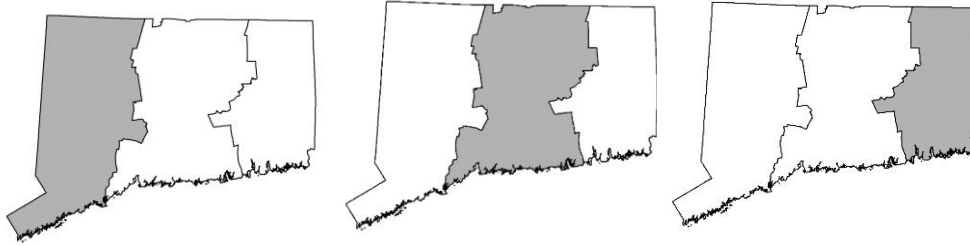
*Keep Connecticut's Water in Public Trust* – The State's water is managed by riparian water use principles and its use is overseen by DEEP under the water diversion program. As such, water will remain in the public trust. Water utility customers don't pay for "water" per se. Rather, they pay for the pumping, treatment, and distribution of that water (and related costs) to their homes and businesses. Such use of water is allowed and regulated by the state. The WUCC process will not result in the changing of ownership of water.

*Require Water Conservation* – Water conservation is an important element of sound public water system operation. In some cases, significant conservation measures have already been enacted. In other cases, public water systems could benefit from additional conservation efforts. While the WUCC has no regulatory enforcement powers, water conservation has been identified in the regional water supply assessments as a key issue for further evaluation in the coordinated water system planning process.

*Develop a Regional Water Planning Strategy* – Development of a regional water planning strategy is one of the anticipated outcomes of the WUCC process. This will culminate with the completion of the areawide supplement.

*Prioritize the Need for Clean Drinking Water Over Corporate Interests* – Public water providers operate and provide drinking water based upon statutes and regulations, their individual charters and enabling legislation, as well as the feasibility of providing service. Provision of water may not be withheld from a viable business or individual if the water utility has sufficient water available to provide. Those utilities that are required to prepare an individual water supply plan are also required to identify priority users. In many cases, priority users include high-volume industrial and commercial customers in the same vein as hospitals and other residential care facilities. Typically, these are considered

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priority users because they employ a significant number of people, and the desire to get as many people back to work as soon as possible following a disaster or emergency. In other cases, such as power plants, these facilities are required to for those experiencing power outages (particularly homeowners with private wells) to return to normalcy.

Provide Ample Opportunity for Public Comment – The WUCC process is one of public inclusion. All meetings are noticed and open to the public. Meeting agendas, presentations, and minutes are posted on the DPH website, as are documents that are developed as part of the coordinated water system planning process. Public comment has been and will continue to be sought on each major plan element as well as interim documents that are developed to support the process. Finally, any member of the public may request to be added to the e-distribution as an interested party and receive direct emails pertaining to the WUCC process.

Many of the above issues are also being considered as part of the development of the State Water Plan. We encourage the public to contact the Connecticut Water Planning Council to determine how to remain informed of that process. In particular, several public meetings have been scheduled in early 2017.

The WUCC officers appreciate public input and involvement and look forward to a rigorous planning process over the next year and a half.

Very Truly Yours,

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