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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

STATE WATER PLANNING COUNCIL

Regular Meeting held Via Teleconference on August 3, 2021, beginning at 1:30 p.m.

H e l d B e f o r e:

JOHN W. BETKOSKI, III, CHAIRMAN,

and PURA VICE-CHAIRMAN

A p p e a r a n c e s:

WATER PLANNING COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

MARTIN HEFT (OPM)

LORI MATHIEU (DPH)

GRAHAM STEVENS (DEEP)

ALSO PRESENT (on record):

KAREN BURNASKA

MARY ANN DICKINSON

RYAN TETREAULT

TIZIANA SHEA

JOE AYOTTE

MIKE DIETZ

VIRGINIA de LIMA

PETER HADLER

CARLENE TAYLOR

ALICEA CHARAMUT

MARY ANN DICKINSON

DENISE SAVAGEAU

COUNCIL STAFF:

LAURA LUPOLI

ALYSON AYOTTE

(Begin: 1:30 p.m.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to Water Planning Council meeting for August 3, 2021. I call this meeting to order.

The first order of business will be the approval of the minutes of the July 6, 2021 meeting transcript.

Do I hear a motion?

MARTIN HEFT: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Motion made. Seconded?

LORI MATHIEU: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Motion made and seconded that the transcript from the July 6th meeting be approved.

All those in favor?

THE COUNCIL: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: The motion is carried.

Okay. We have busy agenda. We have three presentations that we're going to hear this afternoon, one from Ryan Tetreault and Tiziana Shea with DPH. And Joe Ayotte from the USGS will present on private wells and the arsenic and uranium study.

Then we're going to have Mike Dietz on the best water quality testing. And then we're going

to have Peter Hadler who -- I'm very happy he's going to be with us to discuss the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program, which is a federal program that is going to be channeling some money into the State for those individuals not having the funds to pay for their water.

So we're putting a program together and then we're going to hear about that.

So if there's no questions, we'll go right to Ryan.

RYAN TETREAULT: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for having us. I'm Ryan Tetreault, Supervisor of the private well program at the Connecticut Department of Public health. And today we're going to talk about our arsenic and uranium study that we conducted in partnership with the USGS.

We were applying for a grant application which was focused on reducing drinking water exposures. And we noticed that other states to our north, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine had done similar studies and we included funding for our grant to study the prevalence of arsenic, uranium in private wells here in Connecticut.

And I'm going to turn it over to Tiziana Shea, one of my staff in the private well program

and then Joe Ayotte with USGS who's going to speak, speak about the findings of the report itself.

So I'm going to turn it over to Tiz.

TIZIANA SHEA: Bear with me while a share my screen with this presentation -- my apologies.

There we go. Hopefully everybody can see that. All right. So I'm Tiziana Shea. I work for the Department of Public Health, the Private Well Program. And I'm going to be talking a little bit about our private well, arsenic and uranium study; how we collected the data, our outreach, how we actually used the opportunity for outreach, and then how we can use some of the findings that we developed through the study.

In Connecticut about 23 percent of our state's population are served by their own private well water systems, and that equates to over 820,000 people. So Connecticut residents, it's a pretty large population. And so it's really important for us to consider outreach measures, our approach to make sure that we're informing private well users, providing them with the technical assistance they need and giving them outreach measures that they deserve so that they

better understand how to -- what they should be testing for and how they should maintain their own private well water systems, since it's their responsibility.

Typically in Connecticut private well users, it's the responsibility of the private well user to test their own water quality. But we do have a state laboratory, a state DPH laboratory that can be used by local and state agencies for investigatory reasons. And that would include things like studies or contamination investigations. Otherwise, it's not open to the general public.

About eight years ago, as Ryan alluded to, many of our nearby states had started to find the prevalence of both arsenic and uranium in their well water. So we decided to embark on a mission to determine whether or not they were also an issue here in Connecticut, which we expect -- expected that they would be.

We realized that this would also serve as an opportunity for us to do some additional outreach to private well users throughout the state, targeting those areas where private wells were prevalent and just spread the word about general

maintenance and testing recommendations.

A VOICE: (Unintelligible.)

TIZIANA SHEA: Does someone have a question?

(No response.)

TIZIANA SHEA: Okay. Sorry.

Okay. So around the same time we developed a guidance document about private well testing. So this guidance document is available online. We handed it out readily during our outreach events.

And at that time what we did was we went ahead and included things like arsenic and uranium in the recommendations that we were making to homeowners for testing, as we suspected that we would be finding them here also in Connecticut based on the geology that we have in Connecticut and the similarities we are seeing in other nearby states.

So we weren't sure to what extent we were going to find these things. So obviously at that point we needed to, kind of, dig a little bit deeper.

Arsenic and uranium, they're naturally occurring and they can leach into our groundwater

from bedrock and soil, and unfortunately there is no associated taste/color/odor.

So a homeowner is not going to know if they're present in their water unless they test for them. So really testing is the only way to know if they are there, not unlike other contaminants in water as well.

So the state laboratory decided to help us out. They were willing and able to give us some assistance here by providing us with bottles and with the analysis we needed to actually gather this data. So for logistical reasons, we also had to consider the fact that the homeowners were going to have to collect the samples on there own.

So we had to make sure that the sample collection was going to be done by private well users, that it was going to be something that they could easily do on their own and wouldn't be terribly complex.

The other thing we need to consider was that we were going to be handling quite a bit of samples to -- over to the state lab for analysis. So we're going to be giving them samples in bulk, and it needed to be something that they could have the capacity to actually manage once they actually

got the samples from us -- fortunately, arsenic and uranium, for the -- for both. So that was a positive.

We had to consider our approach. Our first approach was actually to work with our local health departments. And local health at the very beginning were given a set of bottles for each of their communities, and they would hand them out to their homeowners based on volunteers that wanted them.

But we needed to -- we quickly realized that we needed to think bigger. It just wasn't enough.

So our first approach after that was to target agricultural fairs. And obviously, in Connecticut we have large fairs where we have a lot of community members that are going to be going to, and they also happen to be very conveniently placed in areas with prevalence of private wells. So it worked out pretty well for us.

But what we found -- as I said, although we met with some success at these events, most of the fair-goers were there really for the fried foods or for the rides, and they weren't really there to talk to us about their water.

So we definitely talked to a lot of folks and gained some interest. But the bottles, what we found the most discouraging part of it was that the bottles that we had handed out, we actually got a very low return rate on, in some cases around 30 percent.

So we weren't really getting enough return on our investment and needed to refine our approach. So based on that, we decided to do more targeted events. So what we did was we actually set up shop in towns with prevalence for private wells. And we had events held in the evenings or afternoons to better accommodate people's schedules. People would be coming home from school or from work and could stop by and talk to us.

What we did was we actually had a sample kits set up with all the instructions they needed. And with that, we also took that opportunity to make sure that we included additional educational materials about general private well testing, recommendations and maintenance on private wells.

And what we found with that was that it usually targeted a very good response from the community. Sometimes they were smaller targeted

crowds, and sometimes they were very large crowds -- but the bottom line was/is that the folks that came to these wanted to be there and they were generally interested in their well, and their well being associated with their well water quality. So it was really quite successful for us in that regard.

And what we found was the return rate for these targeted events for the water bottles was significantly improved, usually around the 90 percent mark versus where we were with agricultural fairs. So it was really a great approach and we were able to make a lot of headway with our outreach measures as well.

So along the way, we partnered with quite a few folks. We partnered with our Connecticut local health departments and districts; obviously the state laboratory. And in many of these targeted events what we actually did was we asked our well water contractors or our private laboratories to join us at some of these outreach events just to give people the ability to really think outside; just arsenic and uranium and a free test kit, and really give them more of a holistic approach on their water quality.

And we found that that was really successful and it really helped people gain the information that they need -- needed about their water systems.

And then we approached the United States Geological Survey to help us with the data that we were collecting. And during this approach, what we did was USGS helped us develop a grid approach for the entire state. And this was a way for us to actually refine the information and the data that we had and were collecting.

So we wanted to make sure that we established adequate representation across the state where private wells were prevalent. We wanted to make sure that everybody had a fair share of making sure that their data was included and represented in this, in this study that we did, and any findings that we actually approach with it.

So we started with a grid of 400 cells, and then we basically modified it from there for manageability reasons. And at the very end I made a final push to actually collect samples in any of the areas where we just didn't have enough data or we had no data at all.

In some of those cases it was a little bit

tough because there might have been very rural areas where, you know, there was only a few houses that were in those areas -- but we, for the most part, we were able to collect data for every single one of the cells that we needed.

So more importantly, why? Why arsenic and uranium? You know, what are the concerns associated with it? And obviously, as all of this was happening as we were doing these events we were getting water quality results in, and so we needed some manageable things; actually having the events and then dealing with the data that was coming in.

So as data was coming in I was actually providing letters to each of the homeowners that participated. So they had their water quality results and they also had educational materials that went along with that based on what the results were. The letter -- actually, I sent a letter that explained the results if they had questions about what it meant.

And anyone who exceeded arsenic/uranium, or both MCLs was prioritized. So as soon as we got those results in those letters went out really quickly. And with that I provided educational

materials that helped them understand what to do about it.

The MCL for arsenic is 10 micrograms per liter, or .1 milligram per liter -- I'm sorry that should be .01. And the primary health concerns with arsenic are with the water that's being consumed. For arsenic it may increase your risk for bladder, lung, liver, skin cancers, and can also cause health issues associated with skin, cardiovascular, immune and neurological systems.

So unfortunately, the list of health effects that are associated with arsenic are pretty long and quite scary for a lot of folks. So we want to make sure that we're being conscientious of these issues and informing homeowners about the prevalence of the potential for arsenic to be in their water so they can protect their health.

And likewise for uranium, also the same way; the primary health concern is with the water that's being consumed and the MCL is 30 micrograms per liter for uranium. And uranium exposure from drinking water may negatively affect kidneys over time.

So for both, because we were doing these events we wanted to make sure that we had guidance

documents that spoke to both of these, these contaminants in water and could answer a lot of the questions that homeowners might have.

So these were provided at each one of our outreach events. And so during our face-to-face events these guidance documents were provided to every homeowner that came to talk to us. So they had the information upfront about why they were doing the sample collection and what these things would mean if they were found in their water.

It also talks about health effects. It talks about what they can do about it if they find it and where it comes from, things of that nature. And these are available on our website as well.

If a private well owner does find arsenic or uranium in the water, they can absolutely do something about it. In most cases, like I mentioned before, both arsenic and uranium are primarily concerned with the water that you're ingesting, so the water that you're consuming.

So reverse osmosis can be used for both treating arsenic and uranium. Generally speaking, people would install this at a point of use or at their kitchen sink, and would treat the water that they would use for consumption purposes.

For whole-house treatment an ion exchange unit would be a viable option for a whole house for both arsenic and uranium. And for arsenic only, metal oxide filtration is another option that could be used, and metal oxide filtration could be used both as point of use or the whole house treatment.

So the bottom line is that the study warrants recommending all private well owners testing for arsenic and uranium at least once. And so I'm going to turn it over to Joe in just a few minutes, and Joe will explain the breakdown of the data that we actually got.

The data that we collected was done -- was collected during the timeframe of 2013 to 2018. And when it was all said and done we had over 2,000 samples for both arsenic and uranium each. So we had quite a bit of data to go off of. And that's what -- really we found that based on the data that we collected, you know, this testing recommendation to include arsenic and uranium was definitely warranted. And it was something that we've made sure that we pushed to help homeowners understand and to try to gain their interest in doing so.

Through the study, not only did we get volunteers to collect samples, but we also found through the State, through our private laboratories that there was an increase in the amount of folks that were testing for both arsenic and uranium on their own. And that was attributed probably to just word of mouth, homeowners just talking to each other -- which is really powerful.

In April of 2021, just earlier this year, we actually did a press release, a joint press release with USGS to promote the findings and the report itself. And what we noticed was that there was, again another uptick in interest in private well testing. And the labs noted it and I noted it as well with people calling and asking questions.

So it really did help us spread the word, and it didn't really just cover arsenic and uranium, but really helped spread the word about overall testing, comprehensive testing of private well water.

And just to kind of wrap this up, I wanted to explain to folks that everything that you see at the very top of this list here under the section, Public Health Code Section 19-13-B101 is what's

currently required for all private wells that are newly constructed in the state of Connecticut.

So when a private well is constructed in Connecticut, the next step is they need to collect water samples and send that to their local health department for well use approval. And everything at the top of this list is something that's required.

At the bottom of the list you'll notice that there are additional set of contaminants listed there, and that can -- these can be required by the local health department based on reasonable grounds. So if the local health department knows that there's an issue in the area, they can also require that a newly constructed well test for these additional parameters. And so the findings that we have from this study can help inform those decisions in local communities as well.

This is me. This is my contact information at the bottom. You'll see a couple of our links to our private well program pages. Feel free to reach out with any questions at any point.

And from here I will turn it -- I'll stop sharing and turn it over to Joe Ayotte who works for the United States Geological Survey.

JOE AYOTTE: Okay. Thanks to Tiziana. I'll go right into it, I guess, if that works for everyone. I'll share.

Can you see that okay?

TIZIANA SHEA: Yes.

JOE AYOTTE: Yes. Okay great.

So thanks for having me and letting me talk a little bit about the study. Just so you know, I am the Chief of the Environmental Hydrology Section of the US Geological Survey, New England's Water Science Center and I'm based in Concord, New Hampshire.

So for now I'm going to talk a little bit about the objectives -- which you've heard some about, so I'll be brief -- our approach, and then get into the results, and a little bit on what they mean.

And you heard from Tiziana that we really wanted to do a better representation of what was known about arsenic and uranium across Connecticut, and ultimately synthesize that information into representative statewide numbers. Instead it can be used for planning purposes, and ultimately also because these are contaminants sourced from geologic materials they wanted to

relate this information to geology.

This is a generalized geologic map Of Connecticut from 1985. It's currently being revised, but what I want to point out is that even in this generalized form the geology is highly complex, and you probably know that just from driving across the state.

But more importantly that complexity has direct implications for where we find wells with high concentrations of arsenic and where we find wells with high uranium, and I'll show you a little bit about that in a minute.

So also as mentioned, we used a grid approach, grid-based sampling approach, equal area grid cells across the state. And that does a couple of things. It enables us to put the State on even footing and really get representative information for the state. And one of the ways we represent this is by computing percentages of areas across the state that have arsenic greater than 10, or uranium greater than 30. And we can group those by grid cell or by geology, or whatever -- and I'll show you that in a moment.

So this map shows the very simplest of results, the raw data plotted on the state map.

And you can see that there are quite a few samples across the state. Some of them are highly clustered, but really we've covered most of the land area of Connecticut thanks to Tiziana and her efforts, and Ryan, to get those samples and get information where we needed it.

Still, these maps are both informative and also misleading at the same time because your eye is drawn to clusters of data, areas where the circles are biggest representing high concentrations and so on. And so this grid based approach, which we speak of as a way of removing some of that clustering, number one, and also removing some of the bias associated with where samples are collected and where they're not.

And so these maps show the final grid cells that we used across the state, and they're colored according to the percentage of wells in each grid cell that had Arsenic greater than 10 on the map on the left, and uranium greater than 30 micrograms per liter on the right.

And you can see a couple of things from these maps. One obvious thing is there are places where the arsenic concentrations or the percentage of wells with high arsenic are also where the

percentage of wells with high uranium occur. So in the northwest corner of the state you can see those areas are prone to both. But Central Connecticut. You can see that there is very high concentrations of uranium, but not for arsenic and this is not uncommon.

There are reasons why the two contaminants co-occur, and then there are reasons why they don't, and it's generally geologic and we know that from other states in New England where we've done similar work.

So we can also color these grid maps by the percentage of wells with arsenic greater than concentrations lower than 5 or uranium lower than 30. So if we took half of the arsenic, arsenic greater than 5 and uranium greater than 10, this is what the maps would now look like.

And you can see that more of the grid cells are colored, because obviously there's more wells that have lower concentrations than high. And you start to see some patterns emerging. Mainly a southwest/northeast trend of the arsenic issue that we also see in other states, like New Hampshire and Maine. And that uranium occurs in high concentrations and in low concentrations in

large portions of the state.

If we now look at this based on much lower concentrations of arsenic greater than three and uranium greater than one, you can see that pattern for arsenic a little better that I mentioned.

But This is uranium greater than one microgram per liter. The standard is 30, but what I want to point out is that at least some uranium is fairly likely to occur in 30 percent or more wells almost statewide. That's not necessarily a health problem, but I just want you to know from an environmental point of view we do see uranium that's measurable in a lot of wells.

We also looked at this issue by geology, which I mentioned, geology has a strong influence. And here the geologic formations are colored by the percentage of wells in each formation that have arsenic greater than 10.

You can see that there are areas where the geology is very much related to high arsenic, and then areas where it's not.

And if we do the same thing for uranium, you can see that it also follows some sort of geologic framework, but that it's in large part opposite in a few places similar to what we see for arsenic.

I'll flip back.

There's the arsenic. There's the uranium.

So that whole central part of Connecticut and even northwest parts, sort of, differ by arsenic and uranium.

So that's kind of it in a nutshell, and I'll sort of summarize this based on the main takeaways from all of that complicated map information. And it kind of goes like this. About 4 percent of the wells across Connecticut viewed on spatially equal footing have arsenic concentrations greater than the current MCL level of ten micrograms per liter. About 5 percent have uranium that's higher than the current MCL, 30.

And those are -- in some ways they're small percentages, but when you think about the proportion of wells in use in Connecticut for private supply, that even compared to the other states in New England it still represents a lot of wells, and even more people.

The other thing to note is that concentrations are highly variable well to well. So it's not possible to predict individual well concentrations, but rather just areas where wells are more prone. That said, high concentrations

can occur in wells anywhere, even where the probability of high concentrations is low. That's an important feature.

Again, it's difficult to predict individual wells. So as Tiziana mentioned earlier, really the message is that everyone needs to test if you want to know what's in your water.

This is the report that we produced and the citation for that on the left, and the data that were used in that analysis are in the citation on the lower left. And I encourage you to -- anyone who's interested to take a look.

And that's all I have. I'll leave it, leave it there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thank you very much, Joe and Tiziana. Appreciate your comments.

Does anybody have any questions?

(No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: A very excellent presentation, something that we tend to forget if it's not brought to the forefront. And I think the fact that you're doing the outreach you're doing is just absolutely excellent.

So any questions?

LORI MATHIEU: Jack if I could?

THE CHAIRMAN: Sure.

LORI MATHIEU: To echo what Tiziana and Joe mentioned, the press release that was issued, the joint press release that was issued earlier this year -- a quote in there from our Department, from our Commissioner urging everyone who is a private well owner to get tested at least once.

And so the background information and all of the information that Tiziana walked you through, and Joe walked you through about the study itself and how it was developed, it basically comes down to that.

You don't know. You can't use the map to predict unless you test. And so the urging here is for people to understand that there is health associated concerns with both arsenic and uranium. And they're real, these are what we call em MCLs, maximum contaminant levels that are set for public water systems across the country.

And when we first -- when I first got involved with overseeing the private well program about a year and a half ago, when this study then came out we wanted to make sure that we were

sharing this with everyone.

And we're going to continue to work with our local health partners to get the word out about this information. So I'm thrilled with the presentation today and the amount of information that we've been able to bring to everybody in the last 25 minutes or so.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Lori.

LORI MATHIEU: There's about 800,000 people that drink water from private wells. There's about 325,000 private wells in our state. Many of them are not tested whatsoever. So there's a lot of work to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any other questions before we move on to our next presentation?

(No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Can we get this presentation sent out to people, Lori?

LORI MATHIEU: Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely.

THE CHAIRMAN: To the LISTSERV and Council members, that would be great.

LORI MATHIEU: Maybe even Tiz or Joe, or Ryan, if you guys could put a link for anything in this, in the

Zoom meeting?

TIZIANA SHEA: Sure.

LORI MATHIEU: That would be great. And then we can -- it's also, Joe, you had shown your QR code. That's the actual study?

JOE AYOTTE: Yes.

LORI MATHIEU: Okay. And then the other -- I believe, Tiz, on our webpage and possibly, Joe on your web page, that the information is found there as well?

TIZIANA SHEA: Yeah. So the actual information, the report is found on USGS's website. It's actually the QR code that Joe just showed previously.

And then we don't have the study up on our website, but if you were to look for it, you can find that on USGS's website.

And unfortunately, I don't have a link for the presentation that we just did, but I would be more than happy to create a PDF of it and send it out via e-mail to everyone, if that works?

LORI MATHIEU: Great, thank you. Yeah. That would be perfect. Thank you.

TIZIANA SHEA: Yeah, thank you very much for inviting us today.

THE CHAIRMAN: No. Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Well done.

Mike Dietz, would you like to talk about domestic well water quality testing? It's a nice segue, a nice presentation into this presentation.

Mike?

MIKE DIETZ: Thank you, Jack. Yeah, I was going to say the same thing. We certainly are hitting on an important topic here. And the last thing that Lori said about most people aren't testing their water is a big problem.

And so that, that's actually the driving force behind what I'm just going to present briefly here today. So I don't have a formal presentation. I'm just going to talk about the work that we did, the subcommittee that we formed to work on this issue.

So just briefly, I'm Mike Dietz. I'm an extension educator at the University of Connecticut and direct the Connecticut Institute of Water Resources. And I've been participating in the implementation workgroup for the State Water Planning Council for the past couple of years here. And this, we determined that this was an important enough issue to form another sub workgroup to address it.

So we started to meet back in October of

2020, and I'll just briefly mention the members who participated in this, in this subgroup with me.

So we have Don Carew from ACT labs, Jay Cohen from the Department of Consumer protection, Gene Farkardini from the Connecticut Realtors Association, Meredith Metcalf from Eastern Connecticut State University, John Mulaney from USGS, Gary Robbins from UConn, Tiziana Shea from DPH, Tom Stansfield from the Torrington Area Health District, Ronnie Tenge from DEEP, and Ryan Tetreault from Department of Public Health as well.

So it's a great group. And you know, I really just want to say right up front how appreciative I am of everyone's time that they gave to us to participate in this workgroup.

I definitely don't have all the answers, and you know, we -- it was a really good group to bring a lot of different backgrounds to this issue and talk about these very important things.

So I guess what I'll say is we charged the group -- and this is coming from Virginia and Dave from our implementation workgroup meetings. We charged this subgroup with basically saying, you

know, let's put everything aside, you know, all the real -- the logistics of making changes to the water quality testing requirements in the State, and just say, you know, start out first with what's the science telling us that are problems right now for water quality in our state, for our drinking water.

So that's kind of how we started. We started the whole discussion with, you know, what's the problem? And so naturally arsenic and uranium rose to the top of that discussion.

The timing was really good. As Tiziana mentioned, that the press came out with this in April, but they had been working on this project for quite a while. So the information that she was learning from that, that she and Ryan were learning was definitely brought into our discussion.

So basically, you know, that that rose to the top and a few other things were discussed. You know, I'll just give you a couple of examples. So you know, as many of you are aware, there are a multitude of contaminants that we could test for. We could ask people to test for, you know, to do a full suite of pesticide contaminants on drinking

water. We could now ask people to test for PFAS, because we know that's being found. This is a huge issue, you know, nationwide and also big, big issue of concern in our State.

So we just discussed those again. You know, what is the science? What is the problem? So a lot of these various things we realize can be problems in localized areas, but as we started to whittle down our discussion after that, the logistics of -- okay. It's going to be extremely expensive to require everyone to test for all the pesticides, you know, the pesticide suite. Test for PFAS. You know that's another whole can of worms that we -- we really don't think we can get into.

So basically what we came down to in our recommendations are pretty straightforward. So we have recommended that for private and semi-public wells -- so that was an important thing that we wanted to include in there. That's from Ryan and Tiziana -- we would like to add arsenic and uranium to the list of constituents that are tested for when a new well is installed. That's the first thing.

And secondly, we'd like to require that

entire list of contaminants that is tested for when a well is installed, including arsenic and uranium now to be done at every real estate transaction that occurs in the state where a private or semi-public well is included as part of that property.

So that is the gist of it. The changes that need to take place to make that happen are in statutes and regulations, but what we chose to focus on was the statutory change. So that is Statute 19a-37. And I really need to thank Ryan and Tiziana for their guidance on the statute and regulatory stuff here, because this is not my area of expertise. And I swear they told me these things, like, 15 times -- and I still forget all about it. So I really appreciate all their helping us.

But what we've done is, in our document we've provided the suggested changes to that statute to reflect what we're recommending. So Dave and Virginia, I just wanted to make one quick statement about that.

That, what I call, the final-final version that I sent to you all after a number of back and forth e-mails here again -- I apologize for all

that, but there is one remnant there, right underneath the summary where I say, to accomplish these changes the following regulations and statutes will need to be changed. And I referenced the attachment.

So the remnant in there is the regulation is still referenced, but we do not include that. So we are just recommending a change to the statute to address this. And if there are specific questions about that I will send you to Ryan on questions on that.

So that's basically the gist of it, Jack. I'm happy to answer any questions that anyone has, but again I definitely want to acknowledge the work of our subgroup and the efforts that they put in on this.

THE CHAIRMAN: As do we. Thank you so much, Mike. We appreciate that. You know, it's pretty compelling when you hear right at the beginning of the previous presentation, 23 percent or 820,000 people are served by private wells. That's a significant number of people --

MIKE DIETZ: It is.

THE CHAIRMAN: -- that we really have to have to really become more vigilant to watch out for it. So the

work of both these groups is really timely and very well done.

Any questions for Mike before we move on?

(No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Again, these are always discussions that come up at all our meetings. So we always, you know, update to Lori. You can always keep us apprized what's going on this as well.

MIKE DIETZ: Sure. The one last thing I'll just add, Jack? You know, we -- as you know, later on in our discussions after we, kind of, honed in on exactly what we wanted to recommend we did, you know, have discussions about who this would affect.

You know, the Realtors Association, again, they were represented there. And you know, this small change is going to be such a minor thing. Most people are testing for these, you know, doing at least the basic suite of water quality parameters when they're purchasing a house because the banks are requiring it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

MIKE DIETZ: But what we're trying to prevent are the

people who aren't using -- aren't getting a mortgage. You know, they're doing just a transfer from a family member or something like that. We don't want those people to potentially fall through the cracks and, you know, not do that testing just because they didn't know about it.

So, you know, this is a really small change that we're asking for here. For the new, new house, you know, the new construct, new well construction, adding to constituents to that list is a negligible change in our opinion.

So I just wanted to finish up with that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks so much, Mike. I can't agree with you more.

Okay. With that, let's move on to our final presentation.

LORI MATHIEU: If I could say one thing? I want to say thank you to Mike and all of your work and the team, all of your work. It couldn't be more important at this moment in time.

Jack, you said it very well. 23 percent or 820,000 people consume water from private wells where the water quality is literally unknown. And to add arsenic and uranium, given Joe's study, a USGS study that we helped fund at the Health

Department is very impactful and -- and we can't forget why we're doing this. There's a state water plan that speaks to this.

And if you remember, we -- we as a Council chose to identify two areas to work on, private wells and water conservation. So this is where we need to be. And our agency would like to move this statutory change forward.

So we're going to be working on that. And so that's why I'm quite interested in any comments. I know it's maybe -- but you know this information for Mike has been out for a while. But you know this is something -- the timing is perfect. The time to move forward with legislative initiatives in an agency, if you are to do that is now. So we are working to take that up.

So if there's any input from anyone, now is the time, I guess.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: And Lori and Jack, what do you see as the next steps? And what might you need from the implementation workgroup or from Mike's group in order to accomplish those next steps?

LORI MATHIEU: For us, the information that Mike has is important to the effort. I would say that I would love to see it move forward to the Council so

that -- so that we could take this up and sort of -- Jack, I would leave it to you like.

Would we vote on this? Would we get consensus on it?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah. I mean, I think that this is again something -- as I said earlier, it should be at the forefront on our agenda. I think this, what we heard this morning should be digested by members of the Council and we can discuss it moving forward.

I think to Virginia's point, I mean, we don't want to lose the momentum we have here going because it's critical. And I think we have to look towards -- I mean, people say, oh my God. Another mandate -- but people, we ought to maybe look towards legislating some kind of well testing here.

Because as you know, I fool around with real estate a little bit, and several times I've had real estate deals blow up because after the fact the wells were even contaminated, or they were defective, or whatever.

So I think it's something we should really stay on top -- just we're going to talk later about the fixtures. So to answer a question,

Virginia, we'll continue to talk about it. I'm not sure quite how the implication group fits in just yet.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Let me just have a follow-up comment in that I know from previous discussions that we've had, that those of you representing agencies have said that August is the time that you really have to pull together what you want to propose for the upcoming legislative session.

And if at all possible, if we can, at today's meeting, address any questions that either of any of the individual councilmembers might have so that you could actually approve this report's recommendations today, and therefore make it possible for the agencies to work, move forward on actually presenting it to the Legislature.

LORI MATHIEU: So Virginia, I think I just mentioned that our agency wants to do just that starting now. And as a matter of fact, we've already started that process.

So it would be lovely if this report could come along and support that effort toward that end. As a matter of fact, we're having discussions to go a little bit beyond what is being proposed here. So more to come on all of

that.

THE CHAIRMAN: To your point, we can take that up under new business today.

LORI MATHIEU: Okay.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Finally, this afternoon we have Peter Hadler -- and Carlene Taylor, my friend from the Department of Social Service whom I've known for years. And they've got some exciting news for us during their time crunch, and they're going to talk a little bit about the low-income household water assistance program. And Mike Montgomery, whom I've talked with the week before last; very exciting what they're doing -- and who's going to speak this afternoon.

PETER HADLER: Thanks Jack. This is Peter Hadler. I'll be happy to get us started. Thank you, guys, for inviting us to be able to come and talk to you all. It's been a very interesting learning experience for us at DSS to get to know more about the world of water, as you know, something that we haven't really had a lot of exposure to before.

And we're going to be looking forward to, sort of, working with the community and setting up this new program.

I just wanted to introduce Carlene Taylor, as Jack mentioned. She is our long term expert on LIHEAP, which is the Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program that has a lot of parallels to the water system that we're -- the water program that we're working to set up.

And I'm also joined by Mike Montgomery and Teresa James who have been helpful in us rapidly getting this, this structure stood up for us to be able to start a program in the very near future.

And I also, you know, just wanted to say thank you to Lori Mathieu for helping to connect us to everybody. She's also been a great resource for us, and I believe the team has met with Graham Stevens as well.

And so I really appreciate all the support we've been getting from, you know, our state partners as we try and figure out the best way to operate this program within the federal constraints and requirements.

So I'm going to share my screen -- and hopefully not botch this completely -- just to give a quick overview of the program and then answer any questions that folks may have in tandem with the team.

So hopefully you guys can see the screen. That has got sort of the landing page for our executive summary of the program. And I'm going to see if I can get it to move properly seeing this is not -- I'm not terribly used to this. Let's see if it goes through or not.

All right. So this is just a quick summary of the program. This is the Low Income Home Water Assistance Program, which we are at least temporarily referring to as LIHWAP, as opposed to LIHEAP which is the energy assistance program that is its parallel.

We have been awarded funds from the Department of Health and Human Services to administer the first version of this program to ever exist in Connecticut. This is part of a federal grant opportunity that has been offered to all of the states. And it's really sort of a new thing that has come out of emergency funding from the pandemic as part of the continuing appropriations act and the American Rescue Plan Act, the funding for this program.

The goal is to help households with the lowest incomes, ones that pay a high proportion of household income for drinking water or wastewater

services. So we're really looking to focus on three priority groups within that broad goal that has been set by the feds.

And that includes restoration of household water services for folks who have been disconnected, preventing service disconnection; and reduction of arrearages, which one can reasonably anticipate may lead to service disconnection.

So this is a very, you know, it is pretty broad, but the basic idea is to help people be able afford their bills and not lose access to water services.

So here's a quick breakdown of the funding that we have received. It's approximately $9.7 million dollars in total funds. A piece of that will be going towards administrative costs -- and so to outreach. And the remainder of it will be delivered as benefits directly to -- for households through vendors.

We actually will be providing payments to eligible drinking water and wastewater providers rather than to the individuals who need to pay the bills. This is a requirement of the program.

So we have a model plan that has to be

submitted to Health and Human Services in less than one week. So we are under a very tight framework here. And so I just wanted to give you a quick overview of that, and we will have that plan up and available for folks to review -- we are hoping today or tomorrow. It's going to be a very short window for, sort of, review and comment.

It will be based very heavily on the Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program, which is known in Connecticut as CEAP, or the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program. You guys, you may or may not be familiar with that program.

The benefits of sort of modeling the things after LIHEAP is that we've got an administrative structure in place. We work very closely with our partners in the community action agencies. You know, the low-income household population is familiar somewhat to some extent with that application process and flow. And we are anticipating that there will be a fairly large amount of overlap between folks who participate in LIHEAP and those who will participate in LIHWAP.

I just wanted to say, we are hoping to make -- begin making payments in November of 2021.

It's a pretty aggressive timeline. There's quite a lot of work to sort of set up. We're going to be entering supplying vendor agreements for various providers to be able to enter into to facilitate a payment structure. We're setting up an eligibility pathway for applicants to be able to avail themselves of the benefit, request the benefit so that we can evaluate their eligibility and determine the level of the benefit that might be issued to them.

So what have we done so far? We have talked to a number of folks, and I think a number of the folks that are on this call -- which is very helpful. We've been talking to the Low Income Energy Advisory Board and CAFCA who are two of our partners on with LIHEAP, the Connecticut Water Works Association, DPH, PURA -- and of course everyone here on the Water Planning Council, where we're hoping to sort of take this as the first stage to being able to engage more completely with a larger group of folks who are associated with the Water Planning Council.

We've created a program webpage. I'll give you that web link in a minute just to see where that is. We have developed an electronic survey

for distribution to providers. Part of our goal here is to collect information so that we are as informed as possible about ensuring the program is structured in a way that it's successful and that we're identifying the needs of both service providers and those clients who are at risk of disconnection or in arrearages on their bills.

We've developed a communications plan and again, it's sort of repetitive here, but we've met with, of course, DPH and DEEP/PURA and you guys as part of our plan to get information from stakeholders around the State.

And we do hope -- and I've just sort of flagged your question here at the bottom -- that we will be able to leverage your new LISTSERV communications platform to sort of be able to share some background on this program and encourage folks who may be service providers to help fill out our survey.

So that will help us anticipate the level of need that's out there, trying to get a better understanding of how many people may have been protected by the moratorium that's expiring for drinking water services and wastewater services, and to understand better the level of outstanding

bills and what people are facing more broadly. So that's really the goal of the survey.

And so here's a rough level of our timeline from here forward. We've got to submit our model plan next week. We're going to continue planned program development during this August and September.

We're anticipating that the feds will give approval in roughly 60 days. That's based on prior experience with other similar programs. It's entirely possible that it will be faster. They may prioritize this, but that's sort of the rough timeline that we're working in.

And once we've got approval, we'll be putting down the final -- nailing down the final pieces of the program development, finalizing things like ensuring that all the vendors who are in various geographic areas around the state are familiar with the processes that they'll need to set up with our partners in the community action agencies.

And we're hoping for a November 1st -- ideally is when we can start payments. We'll have some folks coming in the door determining their eligibility and have the connections to those

service providers such that we could issue payments on their behalf.

And so here's just -- here's a website that we set up. It's www.CT.gov/DSS/water assistance. It's got this high level-program highlights. It has a link to our provider survey, and as soon as our draft plan is -- has its finishing touches, that's where it will be posted for review.

At the risk of taking me to a different screen, I'll try clicking on it so you can see what it looks like. Did that work?

You guys are seeing the -- a different webpage?

GRAHAM STEVENS: Yes.

PETER HADLER: Great. So here's what our landing page is like right now. Again, it's a quick overview of the program, much of what I just sort of relayed to you on those earlier slides.

The survey link is right here in the middle, and if you've got questions or want additional information about the federal requirements around it, there is a connection -- there's a connect link to the federal page. And we're going to continue to fill out this, this page with the draft state plan.

You know, any additional guidance that we'll be able to provide to providers or applicants will go here as well.

And that's really where I wanted to -- you know what? I can stop there. I can also happily share the information that I just showed you all to circulate as you'd like for your, sort of, ease of reference. And I just want to sort of stop and see if anyone's got any questions?

I know this is sort of maybe a different take on things than you guys have usually got at the Water Council. We're very excited to be able to work with you in bringing this to you.

THE CHAIRMAN: We appreciate you being here, Peter. And you've certainly given us -- you've obtained a lot of information in a very short period of time. And I know that you wanted to, when we spoke, you wanted to talk about disseminating your survey through our LISTSERV -- so we can make sure that happens.

But any questions from anybody in the group, or any -- yes, Virginia?

VIRGINIA de LIMA: I'm wondering, Peter, how you interfaced with the folks at Operation Fuel who are beginning to focus on water. Brenda Watson

from Operation Fuel participates in the implementation workgroup and has a lot of the similar kinds of concerns that you're doing.

So I'm wondering how your -- how you interface with them.

PETER HADLER: Yeah, I'm going to see if Carlene also wants to also hop in and answer this call. I know that we've talked with her in the context, in Operation Fuel, in the context of, you know, our heating assistance programs primarily. You know, they -- they do play a critical role in helping us to administer that program.

As far as the structure of this program, I anticipate that we're really looking at, sort of, almost a simpler process than we have for energy assistance in the way that we'll be issuing benefits. So of course, there are many more vendors and partners throughout the state than we would have for energy assistance.

So there's some, some parallels and, you know, I think that we've been in touch -- but also let Carlene hop in and see if she's got anything to add?

CARLENE TAYLOR: Sure. First of all, thank you very much for having us participate in your meeting.

Yes, Operation Fuel is actually one of the members of the low income energy advisory board, and I think Brenda is the chairperson right now.

And we are aware that she has been able to work with the proper water companies to provide services. The guidance we received from HHS is basically to work with the same contractors that we do work with for our LIHEAP program, the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program, which is a community action agency network, and those will be your contractors to provide services.

They serve households statewide through also a network of intake sites and they process and take applications. HHS has indicated that households eligible for LIHEAP will be categorically eligible for LIHWAP. So our goal is to use that same application process to determine eligibility for those households that have water and wastewater.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Denise?

DENISE SAVAGEAU: Thank you for giving us the explanation of the program. I think it's great work.

The question I have relates back to what we

were just talking about previously with the other presenters, and that has to do with well water. And obviously, there's no utility bill normally with well water, but for low-income households to be able to do the testing and address this, are you looking at a program that way?

And similarly for on-site septic, we have low-income households. You know, a lot of times we think about low income in terms of in the city areas where they're on public water supply, where they're on public sewer, but we also have a portion of our state where we have low-income folks serviced by, you know, wells and septic and they don't have access.

So I don't know if this particular program addresses that, but I'm wondering how you're looking at it. And I do know that there's other COVID relief funds and other funds coming down that possibly could address this. So just wondering if that has been part of the discussion on where you want to take this.

PETER HADLER: Thank you, Denise. That's a great question. You know, unfortunately, the way this program is structured is that it's going to be, you know, folks have to have a provider that has

the benefit to be paid to. So, you know, folks, who've got those private wells and private septic systems are not eligible for this particular benefit.

We have not independently sort of, you know, looked at possible ways to support that population. You know again, this is sort of a new avenue for us, but not to say that that's not something that wouldn't merit attention going forward. And we'd be very interested in, you know, understanding what possibilities that are out there for supporting that community and agree that this program is not going to reach everybody -- fully recognizing that.

DENISE SAVAGEAU: Yeah. I'm just going to quickly add that I know some of our partner states, including New York, is helping folks with on-site septic and whatever. And so I think that it's something that we should really take a look at, and I'll provide some information to folks that will pass that along to you.

Thank you.

PETER HADLER: That would be great. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Denise, any further questions, comments, observations?

LORI MATHIEU: Jack, I'm wondering if --

THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

LORI MATHIEU: Just to follow up on what Peter just said and what Denise brought forward, over the years for private wells we've had people who have lost their well for whatever reason; the pump motor just goes and they have no water, they're low income and they have nowhere to turn.

There's literally no state program to help somebody who has a private well that has gone bad; maybe drill a new well or get connected to a water main you know costs thousands of dollars. And so that is something that we have thought about, and I'd love to work more on this with the Council, and Peter and Carlene with DSS.

I think it's an important item for private well owners and septic, because repairs can be very expensive, very, very expensive, and not affordable for low-income people.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I think Denise and Lori, you make a good point. I know our Operation Fuel, to their credit, when you think about them you think about just help. They assistant in subsidizing oil and gas bills, but they do help people at times buy new furnaces. I mean, I've worked with them

personally with that. So I mean, it's something that we ought to -- and again, this is a new program, as to Peter's statement.

I think it's something very important we should look at.

DENISE SAVAGEAU: And I think -- yeah, I was going to say, and I think Brenda with Operation Fuel is looking at that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

CARLENE TAYLOR: And if I might add just quickly? Because my job is working with private well users every day, I get a lot of phonecalls and a lot of them unfortunately are folks that are looking for funds. So it's a very interesting conversation that we're having right now, and I'm glad I'm here to hear parts of it.

I do want to mention that the only options that homeowners have right now that I can actually refer them to is through the USDA rural development funding program. They have a home repair loan that does cover some portions, or can cover some portions of private well water, things like resolving issues associated with loss of water or pump issues, things like that.

That doesn't cover private well testing, but

it can help homeowners get their well working again, or installing a new well should they need that.

But yeah, I just wanted to mention that this is a great conversation.

DENISE SAVAGEAU: Yeah, I just want to add --

MIKE DIETZ: And I'll add in -- sorry, Denise. I was just going to say, I appreciate you bringing this up. And it's something that's been a big concern to me as well.

I tried to -- I had a new program last year through IWR, and subsidized well testing for folks in the state. And it -- I had way more requests than I had funding available to do the work. So I'm very interested in talking with anybody who wants to do more with us.

DENISE SAVAGEAU: And I did want to bring up the septic issue, you know, as the counterbalance to that. We have the well issue and we think about that as water supply, but we're talking about the state water plan and we're talking about the algal blooms were having, and we know that we've got failing septic systems across the state that are contributing to those algal blooms in our rural watersheds.

It's also -- so it's a water quality issue. We think about that, that waste not being water -- but it's a major water quality issue for our public drinking water supply watersheds, where we have those watersheds that have failing, you know, failing septic systems in them.

So it goes, you know. It's something we really need to look at across the board. Both of these are our problems in our rural communities.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you all very much. Anything further?

(No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So Peter, we'll work with you to get access to the list that you need.

PETER HADLER: Wonderful. That would be great. You know, we'll reach out to you very quickly given our timeline.

THE CHAIRMAN: I know. I know you have a time crunch here. So I know with the time crunch I really appreciate all of you being with us here this afternoon, and a very exciting program.

PETER HADLER: Certainly. And I just wanted to, you know, mention if you guys do have access to other

programs that are sort of maybe closely related like the program that you just mentioned about potentially being able to support households with getting funds for other types of assistance, we can, you know, we can add that to our website.

So you know, we can say this doesn't necessarily cover everything, but here's other possible resources. And we can also share that with our partners in the community action agencies as they'll inevitably have some people coming in looking for support that don't quite meet the requirements of this program.

THE CHAIRMAN: Great. Terrific. Thank you very much. We'll be contact. Bye, Carlene and Mike. Thank you so much.

Okay. Moving right along here. Next we'll have a report on the implementation workgroup update.

Virginia?

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Jack.

As Lori mentioned earlier, the Water Planning Council identified private wells and conservation as the two top priorities for implementation, implementing recommendations from the state water plan.

I want to remind people that the work that Mike talked about today, adding arsenic and uranium to the testing for private wells was actually the second of the two domestic well workgroups that we have been looking at. The first one you may recall was looking at the location, identifying where the various wells were, developing a database, and then it became apparent that Consumer Protection was already developing that database.

It wasn't on the agenda for today, but I would like at some point -- if not today, off the top of somebody's head, or perhaps at the next water Planning Council meeting -- that we get an update on where that database is, if it's moving along, and what the timeline might be that it would be available to really be including valuable information.

So that, those two workgroups covered a lot of the issues of the groundwater wells. The other one was conservation, which is obviously a huge topic. And we decided to look at the drought plan and how the State goes about declaring droughts, and making recommendations to the public and to the various agencies of what needed to be done.

So also you folks received in the last couple of weeks the report that came out of our drought plan topical workgroup that was a very in-depth study of what happened during the last drought in Southwestern Connecticut, and made some very specific recommendations.

That was sent to you along with a summary of just the recommendations. The report itself went into great detail in terms of the thought process of the participants in that group.

And so I'm wondering at this point if you have any questions that you would like to pose. David and I can try and answer them. Steve Groupar who took the lead on that is not with us today, I don't believe -- but if there's anything that we can either address or pass along to Steve and his group to address from that report?

(No response.)

GRAHAM STEVENS: I just wanted to say, I'm really impressed with the work product, particularly pleased with the detailed recommendations. It's always good to see in front of you the task that we can make progress on, on completing to improve

our response.

And just to one of the specific comments in there about our gauging stations and wells that we use, particularly those that don't require someone going out on a regular basis to manually determine the depth of water; something that DEEP is very interested in, very interested in working with our partner USGS to see if there's ways that we can partner to expand that network.

Obviously, we have a lot of reasons that we utilize those, those networks, but certainly for drought planning purposes we would want to make sure that if there was the ability to expand that network -- which I will say has been a multigenerational effort with limited success, or any success really to speak of given to -- not due to USGS or DEEP's efforts, but just really due to funding.

You know we would certainly want to take into consideration of the needs for drought and drought monitoring. So that's -- I'm really excited to see that in there.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Just picking up on Graham's comment and putting on my former USGS hat, I think we, as people discuss looking at the groundwater well

network, It's not just expanding the network, but it's also hardening the network, if you will.

There are a lot of the wells, and some of the ones with the longest period of record, that are old hand-dug wells on private property. And so every single one of those is at risk for somebody saying, I no longer want the liability of having this well on my on my property, because there they're three feet in diameter and have some kind of cover on them that a kid could easily remove -- and fill them in, or decide that they no longer wanted to allow the USGS to access those wells for the monthly measurements that are currently being done.

And so in those cases we would look to, we the USGS, and presumably with the interest of you folks, would look to either putting a new well somewhere close by in the same formation, or even just putting a well down the middle of the dug well so that you would have two inches of well rather than three feet of well so that you would eliminate those potential risks. So there's that component of it as well as expanding it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to --

GRAHAM STEVENS: Yeah, and those -- oh, I'm sorry,

Jack.

THE CHAIRMAN: Graham, I'd like to introduce the motion that we accept this drought report and refer it to the interagency drought workgroup for further consideration, review, recommendations.

I think that we owe it to the group to accept it formally today and then to refer it. We have a standing group on drought that meets that Martin chairs on a regular basis. So I think it would be appropriate for us to have motion to accept this report -- and so we're not letting it just collect dust here.

LORI MATHIEU: So moved, Jack, so moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do I hear a second?

GRAHAM STEVENS: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Motion made and seconded that we accept the work of the report of the workgroup on drought, and that we refer it to the interagency workgroup for further review and considerations and recommendations that they make.

There the interagency workgroup, as you know, is in the process of reviewing their mission including membership and their goals and objectives. So I think the timing of this report is perfect to tie it into what Martin and his

group are doing.

Any questions, comments?

(No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: All those in favor signify by saying aye.

THE COUNCIL: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: The motion is approved.

Congratulations, Virginia.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Thank you very much for approving that, and thank you to Steve Groupar and his group for all the work that went into it.

Then just very briefly -- those are our two main topics, but you may recall we also have a topical workgroup looking at outreach and education. And they have decided to focus primarily on the education piece of it and to develop those, those materials.

And then later if their outreach is needed in the future, they would be working closely with the agencies and with the Water Planning Council in terms of how to address that.

There we also have a group on implementation tracking, and there are some questions that have

come up. They're at the very preliminary stage of there of there deliberations, but some of the things that they're going to be looking at is, what is the purpose of the tracking? What would be the end result? Who would be responsible for doing it? Who would the audience be?

And also because a lot of the work is being done by individual agencies as opposed to by the Water Planning Council as a whole, how would it be that they could capture all the work that was being done in the agencies that are working on water issues?

We talked about possibly using a future implementation workgroup meeting as a brainstorming session to address some of these concerns. If we were to do that, we would obviously advertise it so that the people who might not normally be attending the IWG meetings could participate in that brainstorming session.

What the group realized in their discussions is that this was a multiarmed octopus that they had to get their hands around so that whatever they came up with was an efficient way and a meaningful way of tracking the work that was being done.

Also what came up in their discussions -- and this is something that perhaps Alecia, you're going to be talking about, was whether we should have a staff person who was devoted to the implementation of the state water plan and could thereby oversee any process of tracking the progress of that plan.

So that's basically what we -- oh, the one other comment that came up, and this is something, Martin, you might be able to address either today or in a future meeting, is as the State comes back to some form of in-person office work and meetings, and if we were to have hybrid meetings for any of these groups, what are the Freedom of Information Act requirements for those hybrid meetings?

I think there are a lot of questions there that we all need to be aware of as we move through the next several months.

MARTIN HEFT: Yeah. Some of that I can forward you -- the information that's in the implementer bill has provisions for that that FOI has done, and those are the provisions that are in place right now, at least temporarily, I believe, for the next year and a half while the Advisory Commission on

Intergovernmental Relations reviews all of that and makes a recommendation back.

So there are provisions that allow for hybrid meetings, but you have to follow those provisions that are in the legislation that was just passed.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Yeah, that would be very helpful. Thank you.

MARTIN HEFT: That was done in reference with the FOI commission.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Yeah, thank you.

MIKE DIETZ: Virginia, in regards to your question about the private well database. So Jay Cohen is the person at DCP who is working on that, and he's also participated in our water quality workgroup as well.

He told us recently that they are currently getting entries into the database. So it's functional and being used.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Excellent.

MIKE DIETZ: But our -- and if you remember this from the report, the biggest issue is the entire suite of paper logs that are still sitting around that are not entered into that database yet. So in order to make it functional, we need to address that issue of getting the old records entered into

the database.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Do you know if there's a mandate that new wells be entered in?

MIKE DIETZ: Yes, that all new wells need to go in through that electronic portal.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Excellent. Thank you.

RYAN TETREAULT: I can clarify on that. I know for -- it's voluntary right now for all new wells to be sent in by well drillers. And once DCP has their new regulations in place -- they're currently making revisions to the regulations. The new reg set does require electronics to metal.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Excellent. Do you have any guesses as the timeframe of that? Are we talking weeks? Months? Years?

RYAN TETREAULT: I don't know that. I would refer that to DCP for an answer.

VIRGINIA de LIMA: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Graham, I cut you off before? Do you have any --

GRAHAM STEVENS: No, Jack. When you speak it's never getting cut off. Never.

No, I think I can reserve those comments for another meeting -- but I just was getting overly excited about groundwater wells.

But I think real quick to Virginia's point, some of those deficiencies or risks are probably more easily dealt with because that's more of an infrastructure as opposed to an operational need.

THE CHAIRMAN: Virginia, all set? Thank you, so much for your work.

And we'll move on to Alecia.

ALICEA CHARAMUT: Hi, everybody. So at the last water planning advisory group update we did have a discussion about sort of thinking that it was initiated as a -- how to determine which group does what when a subject comes up, but it morphed into a conversation on, you know, the responsibility of volunteers in the various groups.

And it sort of came to an apex of the need for what the state water plan called a water chief to help support the Water Planning Council to carry out its directives coming from the Water Planning Council; to move forward on recommendations and reports that have been approved by the Water Planning Council.

And there's a reminder in the sections to the implementation of the state water plan under next steps, (unintelligible) and goals. And one of

those, this -- the second one on the list is, hire water plan chief to oversee all aspects of plan implementation, serve as a liaison between the Water Planning Council and the Legislature, and help ensure consistent interpretation of its information and recommendations.

And I've always envisioned this role as someone who's the project manager, a dedicated project manager for the Water Planning Council, someone that can look for and apply for funding, or find resources maybe through internships through some of our really fantastic academic institutions here in Connecticut, to try to work on some of these issues and really move them forward, and find these other resources outside of the groups that are already working to capacity to get some of this implementation done and work on other issues.

So I'm just throwing that out there that, you know, this was again part of the conversation and I think it would be great if the Water Planning Council as a whole can just sort of make this a priority conversation to find some sort of resolution as to whether this is something from the water plan that we would like to see

implemented, and how it can be done.

And of course, you know, this is something that's probably going to take a few months to -- or you know, several months to kind of really think through, but I think it will really help. It will help support the groups that are working on a lot of these issues, for sure.

And not that, you know, the Water Planning Council, I know you guys are so appreciative of all the work that the volunteers do, but it's -- I think things will move along a little bit faster if we have been dedicated to making sure a lot of these details, all -- you know, the i's are dotted, the t's are crossed.

There's that hub. All of the agency support staff who needs to have, you know, certain things posted or to make sure that we have these reports all in a centralized place. And you know, the folks at OPM, Bruce and Eric, they're fantastic about that, but I think it would take something off their plates as well if they just had that person they can send it to, to make sure that all of the information for the folks working on this -- but the public has access to it, too.

So there are a lot of things here, a lot of

things that can be done to help support the Water Planning Council and the groups, and to really kind of move forward at a steady pace and continue to do so.

So that, that kind of is the -- like I said, it was the culmination of a conversation we've had often in various groups on, you know, how we're spreading the work around and the capacity of all the groups to do the good work that needs to get done.

I don't know if you guys want me to pause here for a minute before I get move to --

THE CHAIRMAN: I don't think that -- that's not an unreasonable request. And if you remember -- I'm sitting here talking. I think I've been involved with this Water Planning Council for 20 years.

20 years.

I remember midway through we did have a point in time where we had DEEP -- when actually is was DEP, DPUC and Health. At one point we did fund a position.

Alecia, I think your thought is a good one. It's just a matter of how we do it. I mean, I could easily put an assessment on all the private investor owned water companies if the Legislature

gave me approval to do that. I could put it -- as we can put out an assessment, and Josh will just come. We can put an assessment on the municipal companies as well.

I mean, there's ways to fund it. You're not talking -- when you're talking about maybe the need may be $200,000, you get a person with benefits, that's not a lot of money to spread around.

So I don't think it's unrealistic request. It's part of the water plan. I think it's something we on the Council can discuss further.

GRAHAM STEVENS: Yeah. And Jack, if you'd allow me? I just want to say, I certainly am intrigued by the idea. I think someone who's dedicated to implementing the state water plan as well as carrying out the directives of the Water Planning Council would certainly be helpful.

And I particularly like the concept of providing that instantaneous, or more instantaneous response and assistance to our invaluable volunteers that really have carried us through, in my tenure at least in my observation -- I'm sure far before.

So something certainly that would be

interesting for us to continue to discuss. Obviously, when you're talking about setting up new positions and funding, that that does create some barriers, but certainly I think we have a lot of experienced folks on the Water Planning Council, and that's something that would be a tremendous benefit to implementation of the state water plan.

And thanks for sharing, for bringing forward that message, Alecia.

LORI MATHIEU: And certainly, when we put the state water plan together there's no doubt we foresaw the need for somebody sooner rather than later to serve as this water chief for implementation.

As there is, as I think Virginia mentioned, with tracking and implementation there is a lot of work going on; and the idea of tracking was so that we could track what was happening that was related to the action items within the plan, because we knew this would happen if we didn't have somebody dedicated a hundred percent that was a state person to do this work.

Because we do -- Jack, for your whole time and my time since I've been on this group and part of this group, it's been based on volunteers and

voluntary work. So we've been very lucky that we have the people that we have that are very dedicated that volunteer their time.

So I'm willing to work on this.

THE CHAIRMAN: And I don't think -- I mean, when you think about it, the State invested a million dollars in this water plan. So I mean, the fact that we want to come up with some money, maybe Martin will get over at OPM some pocket change -- for us over at OPM that he can get for us to get this funded when they have their budget talks, or something.

But I don't think it's an unrealistic request. I think we can make a darn good case for it, and I think the Council needs to talk more about this, Alecia.

So we agree. I agree.

LORI MATHIEU: And, Jack, I apologize. I have a three o'clock.

THE CHAIRMAN: I know you have to drop off. I know the meeting has gone -- we had a lot of good presentations today. So I know the meeting went longer than usual. So thank you, Lori.

Alicea, anything further?

ALICEA CHARAMUT: First of all, thank you for taking

that under consideration. Just one other thing is we were -- and I'm not sure what the report was from the last Water Planning Council meeting, but we've decided to keep the hydrilla item on the agenda, the hydrilla in the Connecticut river and the need for funding.

So we're keeping that on the water planning advisory group agenda to stay, just stay abreast of what's going on with trying to find funding there.

So there continues to be some work within the watershed lands group on various items, but -- oh, I see Karen is here. I didn't see Karen earlier.

Karen, do you have anything before we move along?

KAREN BURNASKA: No, just to say that, yes, we, the watershed lands group will continue to pursue discussions on the importance of protecting source water land, on protection land in regards to legislation when we're looking at the legislative conveyance of land.

Margaret Miner and I did meet with -- we had a zoom meeting with the clerk of the GAE Committee, and we have subsequent to that sent a request to the Chairs of GAE, Senator Flexor and

Representative Fox, and asked for a meeting with them to continue discussions.

We haven't heard back, but we'll keep you posted when we hear something.

ALICEA CHARAMUT: And I know we're tight on time for the rest of it, so I'll leave it at that for the rest of the meeting.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Alecia. So Lori left. There was a private well update. I think we had a lot of that.

Water conservation and fixtures I'm going to turn over to Graham, because -- and I see we have Mary Ann Dickinson on the call as Well.

Graham and I have been talking about, as somebody said earlier, now is the time for us to get legislation together; and for our September meeting to get some of the stakeholders into it, invite the stakeholders to that meeting to talk about this.

And Graham has already drafted a great letter for people to be invited to attend this meeting as well.

So Graham, would you like to talk about that and Mary Ann can kick in as well?

GRAHAM STEVENS: Yeah, and thank you, Jack. And I

think that we've done some great work trying to line ourselves up for the next legislative session.

Changing the water fixture standards, obviously as we know, Department of Consumer Protection implements that statutory program, and we were looking at sending out a broad invite to a lot of different stakeholders, legislative leaders, the cochairs of Public Health, the cochairs of Environment.

And Mary Ann, I'm glad you're here, because we certainly would love to see if you could provide a brief overview at the beginning of that discussion for folks on where we are and then where we started, what we've been discussing and what we're proposing. And then also to our ongoing conversations ensuring that we invite all the right folks who have a vested interest.

So there is a real property section of the Connecticut Bar Association. We would suggest inviting the chair, inviting the environment lead for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, inviting the executive directors of our council of government, the Home Builders Association of Connecticut.

There's also real estate, CT Realtors, a lobbyist Jim Heckman, who many of you may know as well as a few other interesting folks. The Association of Plumbing, Heating and Cooling contractors. And then in speaking with Lori at DPH about the Connecticut Well Water Association, certain municipal officials who have interest as well as the local departments of health, as well as the water companies.

So really trying to get a large coalition of folks who are at least invited with some information about what we're talking about so that we could have a preliminary opportunity for folks to provide their thoughts and opinions on this issue which I believe is universally supported by the Water Planning Council, which would be a legislative initiative that would be brought forward by DCP.

And we've also invited the Department of Consumer Protection, the Department of Administrative Services, at DAS; that the Office of the State Building Inspector who has some interest in this as well.

So that's what our plan is for our September meeting for an agenda item there to bring forward

again this legislative concept.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mary Ann, do you want to --

MARY ANN DICKINSON: Yeah, if I could add a little bit?

THE CHAIRMAN: Of course, yes.

MARY ANN DICKINSON: Okay. So you know, I admire Graham's list of all those stakeholders he wants to put together, but you all need to know that many of those won't be necessarily supportive in a coalition.

In the states where this has been adopted, plumbing, heating, cooling contractors, the realtors, especially, you know, a lot of them have been opposing this legislation -- but you need to also know that in New England it's only Connecticut and New Hampshire now that don't have these standards.

In 2021 Massachusetts and Rhode Island both adopted it. So we have New York, Massachusetts, Rhode island, Maine and Vermont that all have adopted statutes like this. And in those states there has been opposition expressed, which of course has been part of the legislative process.

But I just want to make sure -- and I'm happy to help and participate in whatever way you think reasonable -- I just want to make sure you don't

have the expectation that all of those people will uniformly accept it. That's just part of the sausage making in legislation, but I admire you're willing to do the work in advance -- yeah.

GRAHAM STEVENS: No -- and I think sometimes it's most important to engage with those who have differing opinions early on so that they have an opportunity to express that in a public forum.

Not to take anything away from the public transparency provided by our legislative partners, but I think it's good to at least invite. I'm not sure they would even -- not all of them will participate. Some of them may just listen in if they do attend.

But really, I think one of the things that I've seen derail legislative agendas or initiatives is when folks don't engage, whether they are aware or unaware, until the very end and raised concerns at that point.

So I just don't want to see that great work to be derailed by that.

MARY ANN DICKINSON: What we have seen work is where the governor gets involved. So in Massachusetts, Rhode island and Maine, the governor was very involved in, you know, it became part of the

climate change goals and resiliency strategies.

So this may be something to also tie into that effort that's going on in Connecticut.

GRAHAM STEVENS: And absolutely. And just to remind folks there were plumbing fixture standards in the Governor's -- one of the Governor's climate bills last session that didn't make it through.

I don't think the Water Planning Council and DCP thought that that was crafted exactly appropriately. They're talking about water closets in that bill -- but keep my water in the sink.

But I think the Governor has already indicated his support of this type of initiative.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Very good. So we'll plan on doing this.

And you're right, Mary Ann. I mean, it's like we all know from the legislative process you're going to have those that want it and those that don't, but ultimately we're going to make the recommendation as a Council, and we'll take it from there.

MARY ANN DICKINSON: I'm happy to help with whatever you need.

THE CHAIRMAN: We appreciate that very much that you're

going to help us, and I'm optimistic we can get this passed next year.

Okay. Let's move on to the interagency drought working group update.

Chairman Heft?

MARTIN HEFT: Good afternoon, all.

So our meeting scheduled for Thursday is actually canceled this week because OPM, we reviewed all of the current conditions, determined that there is no need to meet.

Now that we have this workgroup report, we can move forward with our next steps, one of the things we are waiting for. So our next meeting is scheduled for September 2nd, which we will begin reviewing all the recommendations and findings, and we'll be in communication with the members of the interagency drought workgroup, you know, sending them the report with a directive from me to -- for them to start reviewing that and be ready to start discussion in our September meeting.

THE CHAIRMAN: Great. That's exciting. A lot of progress in that area, and we appreciate you and your leadership and the group's work on this.

Any questions for Martin?

(No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: If not, any new business?

GRAHAM STEVENS: Jack, on new business did we want to act upon -- I'm sorry. The report that's in front of us --

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, we did. Yes, Graham, we did. We wanted to act on the reports that were given to us earlier by DPH and USGS. We wanted to except those reports and also Mike Dietz's reports on the domestic well quality testing.

So why don't we have two separate motions?

I would entertain a motion that we accept the report of DPH along with USGS on private wells, the arsenic and uranium study.

GRAHAM STEVENS: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Martin?

GRAHAM STEVENS: Second it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Motion made and seconded that the reports that were given to us earlier be approved.

Any questions or comments?

MARTIN HEFT: So just as a clarification, by accepting the reports what are we actually doing by accepting the reports? I mean, we had reports that presented to us. I don't want it to be that

we're accepting the legislative changes or anything -- that that's what this motion means, because I'm not ready to be able to commit to it.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, no.

MARTIN HEFT: So I want to make sure that's clarified in, and our interpretation is of accepting these reports.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, very much like the report we did -- and thank you for that clarification -- that we did with you with the drought. I mean, that's going to go over to you.

So we're accepting this, but it's not like -- we're accepting the report as a formality that we want to acknowledge the work that went into it, but we're not accepting all the recommendations in there.

MARTIN HEFT: Perfect. Thank you. I just wanted it clarified that for the record.

THE CHAIRMAN: Graham, are we set to vote?

All those in favor?

GRAHAM STEVENS: I'm set to vote, yes.

THE COUNCIL: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. And the same with the report on the domestic well water quality testing program. I entertain a motion to accept that report.

MARTIN HEFT: So moved.

GRAHAM STEVENS: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's the same caveat. We're accepting the report and going to look further into the recommendations.

Any questions?

(No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: If not, all those in favor signify by saying, aye.

THE COUNCIL: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: The report is accepted.

A VOICE: Thank you for that.

THE CHAIRMAN: You're very welcome. Any other new business before we move onto public comment?

(No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Any public comments this afternoon?

(No response.)

THE CHAIRMAN: If not, our next meeting will be held September 7th, the day after Labor Day.

MARTIN HEFT: And just on that? Jack, on the agenda, it says, September 2nd. So just clarifying that it's the 7th.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's the 7th, yes. Ally Ayotte, make a note of that, Ally. Yes, it's the 7th.

Entertain a motion to adjourn?

MARTIN HEFT: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Second?

MS. AYOTTE: I did. I was like, psyched. For sure.

THE CHAIRMAN: All those in favor?

THE COUNCIL: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: The meeting is adjourned.

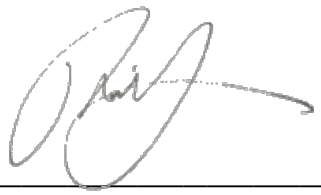
Thank you all very much. Very productive. Very good information; a very good meeting. Be safe, everyone.

The meeting is adjourned.

(End: 3:11 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 87 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original verbatim notes taken of the Regular Meeting of the WATER PLANNING COUNCIL, which was held before JOHN W. BETKOSKI, III, CHAIRMAN, and PURA VICE-CHAIRMAN, via teleconference, on August 3, 2021.



Robert G. Dixon, CVR-M 857
Notary Public
BCT Reporting Service
55 Whiting Street, Suite 1A
Plainville, CT 06062

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VOTES TAKEN
(Unanimous Approval)

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION