

***Report on a Water Planning Chief Position for the State of Connecticut
Recommended Position Description and Duties
Implementation Workgroup to the Water Planning Council
[Date]***

I. Summary

The Implementation Work Group (IWG) recommends the Water Planning Council (WPC) hire a Water Planning Chief who, consistent with the State Water Plan (Plan), would be tasked with oversight and coordination of Plan implementation. The position’s primary duties are defined below and it is recommended the appointment be at a senior level (i.e., not solely administrative in nature) and full time.

II. Background

A State Water Plan was approved by the Connecticut Legislature in June 2019. The Plan was developed under the auspices of the Water Planning Council, as directed by enabling legislation. The overarching goal of the Plan is to balance the use of water to meet all of Connecticut’s water resource needs and, as such, the Plan provides technical information as well as myriad recommendations to achieve its goals.

The WPC is tasked with overseeing implementation of the Plan and authorized formation of an Implementation Work Group that examines the Plan’s various recommendations and provides specific suggestions to the WPC for consideration. Given its significant scope, Plan implementation would be greatly facilitated by appointment of a “Water Planning Chief” rather than relying largely on volunteer committees to augment the limited available staff resources of the agencies to advance the work of the Plan. This individual would ideally be tasked with oversight and coordination of Plan implementation and further support communication between the WPC and various stakeholders, while serving as a point of contact for water planning efforts across the State.

To that end, the IWG drafted a proposal for a topical sub-workgroup to develop a description and list of job duties for a Water Planning Chief to assist in implementing the Plan. At its regular monthly meeting on November 1, 2021, the WPC approved the formation of such a working group.

This report contains the IWG’s recommended roles and responsibilities for a Water Planning Chief position as they relate to implementation of the Plan, as well as direct support for the WPC in furtherance of the state’s water management goals.

III. Proposed Connecticut Water Planning Chief Position Duties

Under the direction of the Water Planning Council, the Water Planning Chief shall undertake the following:

General

- Provide oversight of Plan implementation and coordinate the same between the IWG, the WPC, and the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG), and across state agencies. Support the WPC in its coordination of broader water planning efforts across state agencies.
 - Ensure timely tracking of Plan implementation efforts of the WPC and of work delegated to the IWG and WPCAG and its work groups. Prepare reports on Plan implementation, including but not limited to, periodic reports to the WPC and annual reports to the Legislature, as required.
 - Facilitate priority setting by the WPC and work to advance those priorities in coordination with the IWG, WPCAG, and other interests.
 - Identify and recommend changes to other plans if they conflict with the Plan, reach out to other planning groups, and coordinate comments from other planning groups on the Plan and its implementation. Reach out to appropriate parties to provide relevant information from the Plan to inform and ensure consistency with updates to other state plans to the extent they involve water management.
 - Track and/or measure consistency with the 17 requirements of the Plan’s enabling legislation.
 - Facilitate periodic update of the Plan.
- Identify any additional water-related issues that should be considered by the WPC.
- Identify synergistic opportunities for programs between and within WPC agencies.
- Be a centralized hub for information that flows to and from the WPC and other stakeholders in support of the work of the IWG, WPCAG, and stakeholders.
 - Oversee website content as it relates to the Plan and attendant WPC, IWG, or WPCAG activities.
 - Ensure that documents intended for the public are made available on the appropriate website.
- Identify opportunities and conduct outreach on behalf of the WPC to build broad-based support for Plan initiatives.
 - Work to publicize and gain support for the Plan from stakeholders and the public, and coordinate opportunities with the media and other business or trade associations.
- Identify and report on opportunities for funding and resources needed for Plan implementation and updating.
 - Identify the need for outside resources and draft consultant scope of work proposals for WPC review. Provide oversight of the administration of consultant contracts.

- Identify and advocate for resources to support Plan Implementation, “Next Steps”¹, and updating (e.g., funding, agency staff, and volunteers).
- Identify opportunities for shared funding among state agencies.
- Offer mechanisms for conflict resolution, bringing to bear the information in the Plan, its policy priorities, its overarching goal of establishing a balance between all uses, and the guiding principles for decision-making.

Legislative and Regulatory

- Monitor and report to the WPC on federal and state legislative and regulatory activities that pertain to the Plan and/or activities of the WPC. Make recommendations to the WPC whether to support; identify conflicts with the Plan or modifications that could lead to WPC support.
- Coordinate with agency legislative liaisons and provide supporting information regarding the Plan or WPC activities and priorities on behalf of the WPC.
- Assist the WPC with development of proposed legislation consistent with the priorities and decisions of the WPC and Plan goals as recommended by the WPC or consistent with deliverables of the WPCAG or its workgroups.
- Monitor and/or attend public hearings and review testimony relative to legislative and regulatory issues affecting the Plan. Provide updates to the WPC and provide support or follow up as appropriate.
- Draft position papers, testimony, fact sheets, talking points, and sample letters for WPC use in support of Plan positions.

Administrative Tasks to support the WPC and its Workgroups

- Collect and present relevant information from outside groups, government agencies, the public, and various publications for presentation to the WPC.
- Provide support and coordination with the IWG and WPCAG. This may be accomplished either by assisting the IWG co-chairs in facilitating meetings or actively chairing the IWG.
- Assist the WPC by drafting responses to correspondence.
- Work with topical sub-workgroups and assist in recruiting expertise for workgroup membership to address Plan recommendations.

Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

The ideal candidate will have:

- Considerable administrative and technical knowledge of water resource management including an understanding of the need to balance competing water resource interests for public health, environmental, and economic needs.

¹ “Next Steps” are defined in the Plan as possible recommendations that did not get consensus.

- Expertise on matters pertaining to federal, state, and municipal water-related regulations and procedures. Experience interfacing with state government including the state Legislature and state regulatory agencies.
- Knowledge of climate change and resiliency science for water resources.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Strong facilitation skills and ability to foster a collaborative, results-oriented working environment.
- Proficiency in Microsoft or other products with ability to develop and edit word documents, spreadsheets and presentations to transmit information.
- Proficiency using virtual meeting tools.
- Knowledge of digital mapping and analysis (GIS).
- Familiarity with equity issues, including but not limited to environmental and Health.
- Experience obtaining funding and grant writing preferred.

IV. Administrative Support for Position

There are additional Administrative Tasks necessary to support the WPC and its Workgroups that are recommended be performed by a part time Assistant reporting to the Water Planning Chief or through existing administrative support staff that could perform such functions as directed by the Water Planning Chief.

- Oversee meeting logistics, including posting of meeting notices, minutes, etc., in accordance with FOIA requirements.
- Ensure that meetings are publicly posted in a timely manner.
- Pass reports, documents, and other deliverables from the IWG and WPCAG up to the WPC. Ensure that discussion of these items is placed on WPC meeting agendas, as appropriate.
- Ensure that IWG and WPCAG deliverables accepted by the WPC are tracked as Plan implementation.

V. Discussion

Legislative Engagement

The State Water Plan recommends the WPC “[c]onsider hiring a ‘Water Planning Chief,’ who would be tasked specifically with oversight and coordination of Plan Implementation. This role would include serving as liaison between the WPC and legislature, and overseeing the execution of future steps decided upon by the WPC.” (See 5.5.1 Role and Authority of the WPC.) Notwithstanding existing legislative liaison roles and responsibilities within individual state agencies, it is believed the Plan uses the word “liaison” in its commonly accepted form, i.e., as a person who helps organizations or groups to work together and provide information to each other. To that point, the position duties identified above with respect to legislative and regulatory matters are not intended

to conflict with existing agency legislative liaison relationships, but rather increase the efficacy of the WPC’s interfacing with the state legislature and agency legislative liaisons by facilitating the flow of information.

Relationship with IWG

Members of the topical sub-workgroup offered different views on whether the IWG co-chair structure should remain, or responsibility for leading the IWG should reside with the Water Planning Chief.

- Some felt the existing structure, with co-chairs leading IWG meetings and reporting out to the WPC on IWG activities, should remain. Advocates of maintaining the current approach noted the importance of preserving a strong independent stakeholder role in driving the direction of the IWG (Figure 1).
- Others felt this could lead to some confusion regarding responsibility for driving IWG efforts and the IWG should report to the WPC through the Water Planning Chief position, with the position assuming responsibilities currently handled by the co-chairs (Figure 2).
- Variations offered included allowing the current structure to remain for a certain time frame (e.g., one year) to allow the individual to gain familiarity with the group dynamics before assuming oversight responsibility, or allowing the individual and IWG members to recommend a reporting structure that works best for all involved.
- Under either scenario there is a need to have support provided to both the IWG and the WPCAG.

Figures 1 and 2 depict alternative reporting and relationship structures by and between the WPC, Water Planning Chief, IWG and WPCAG.

Figure 1

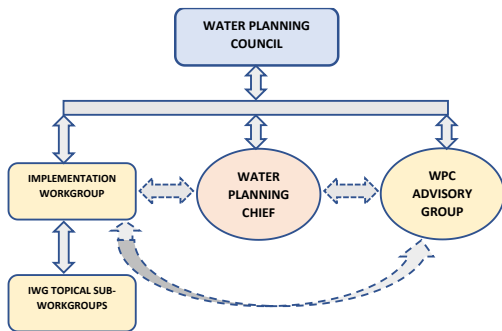
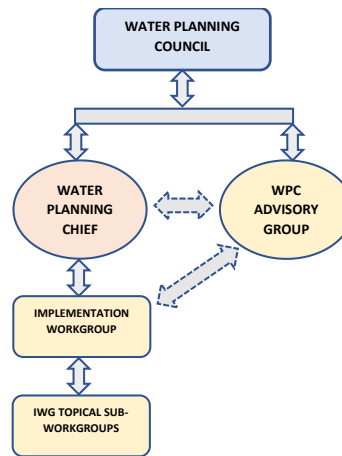


Figure 2



Position Logistics

The logistics of the Water Planning Chief function include items such as:

- Temporary and/or permanent funding sources;
- whether the position would be permanent and full-time, or durational (e.g., multi-year contract and/or part-time);
- whether the position would be as a state employee or consultant;
- if a state employee, the relationship of the position within the agency;
- the position’s line of accountability to the WPC, i.e., through the chair or all members; and
- the availability of administrative support.

While the workgroup’s primary focus was on defining key position duties, the above logistics are viewed as critical to the position’s overall success. Thus, in order to maximize the opportunity for the position to successfully deliver on its core responsibilities, it is recommended the Water Planning Chief:

- Be retained at a sufficiently senior level that is not merely administrative in nature;
- be engaged as soon as practical, utilizing a scope of work approach to secure a consultant or a timely process to define and authorize a state position;
- if a state position, to the extent practicable, it should be housed outside the WPC agencies to avoid being perceived as biased to any one agency’s policy goals;
- be full time;
- be supported with administrative staff;
- be reportable to the WPC through a single point of contact.

VI. Appendix

Membership

Workgroup members included:

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Meetings and material Reviewed

Virtual meetings were held December 2, 2021, January 7 and 21, 2022 and February 4, 2022. In addition to the State Water Plan, members reviewed job descriptions from various positions believed to have relevancy, including the Executive Directors of the CT Siting Council and Connecticut WaterWorks Association. Other states (Oregon and those in the Northeast) were contacted in an effort to obtain job descriptions from analogous positions, but ultimately failed to produce results. Meeting notes are available on request.