



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Keith Ainsworth
Acting Chair

Timothy J. Bishop

Linda Bowers

Christopher Donnelly

David Kalafa

Aimee Petras

S. Derek Phelps

Denise Rodosevich

William Warzecha

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

January 31, 2025

Re: House Bill 6830 - An Act Concerning Training for Members and Employees of Inland Wetlands Agencies

Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Rahman and Rep. Kavros DeGraw, Vice Chairs Rep. Chafee and Sen. Needleman, Ranking Members Sen. Gordon and Rep. Zullo, Distinguished Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) is a nine-member board that works independently of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to assess the condition of Connecticut's environment and report its findings annually to the Governor; recommend actions to improve state environmental programs; advise other state agencies on the environmental impacts of proposed projects; and investigate citizens' complaints and allegations of violations of environmental laws.

The Council **supports** the provisions of House Bill 6830 that would require each member of, and staff person employed by, an inland wetlands agency to complete a comprehensive training program¹ by January 1, 2027, or within one year after such member's election or appointment or such staff person's hiring, and at least once every four years thereafter or once every term for which such member is elected or appointed, if such term is longer than four years. The existing online training program for wetland agencies' staff and members, municipal officials, and interested parties has been well received and provides instruction and guidance on the provisions of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act and the protection of wetland resources. Protecting wetlands is very important because wetlands serve many functions, such as flood water retention, recharge areas for groundwater, and their unique ability to store and sequester carbon. As noted in the Council's 2008 special report, *Swamped*², training of inland wetland agency commissioners and staff members was associated with the alteration of fewer wetland acres for each permit granted.

Thank you for consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Paul Aresta,
Executive Director

¹ CT DEEP Municipal Inland Wetlands Agency Comprehensive Training Program; https://clear.uconn.edu/training/ct-deep-training-certificate-courses/deep_iwa_training/

² Council on Environmental Quality, <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CEQ/SWAMPEDwithlinkspdf.pdf>