



2024 Marks 50th Anniversary of Safe Drinking Water Act

(HARTFORD, CT) – Connecticut will remember 2024 as a year of extremes. Record flooding in August gave way to drought conditions that resulted in unprecedented incidents of wildfire. Water, too much or too little, has been the major topic of news and weather and continues as this December also marks the 50th Anniversary of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

Connecticut’s [Water Planning Council](#) (WPC), an inter-agency council charged with implementing our [State Water Plan](#), spent 2024 celebrating this milestone with a series of workshops on water supply. “As a state rich in water resources, Connecticut continues to be a leader in drinking water protection” **stated Jack Betkoski, Chair of the Water Planning Council**. “The Water Planning Council works continually to ensure everyone in Connecticut has clean water to drink and celebrating the 50th Anniversary of federal Safe Drinking Water Act honors the role it plays in the work that we do.”

Passed into law on December 16, 1974, the SDWA was enacted to protect drinking water and its sources—rivers, lakes, reservoirs, springs, and groundwater wells used for public supply. It authorizes the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) to set national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water. US EPA, state and local governments, and water utilities work together to make sure these standards are met. In Connecticut, the WPC coordinates this work.

The WPC was established in 2001 to address issues involving the water companies, water resources, and state policies regarding the future of the state’s drinking water supply. It is comprised of four members representing the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). The WPC also oversees the implementation of the State Water Plan which affirms the State’s commitment to maintain the highest quality drinking water while balancing in-stream and out-of-stream needs.

“This year Connecticut experienced both extreme rainfall events and severely dry conditions. Both impact our drinking water supplies” explains **Martin L. Heft, Undersecretary,**

Intergovernmental Policy and Planning Division, OPM and Chair of the CT Interagency Drought Workgroup. “The anniversary of the SDWA reminds us that we cannot take our water resources for granted. We are currently still in a Level 2 Drought and, although reservoir levels are stable for now, it is something that we are watching very closely.”

According to Connecticut Department of Public Health Commissioner Manisha Juthani, MD: “Our agency works closely with EPA and water utilities as the lead agency in CT for public water supplies. One of the most important provisions of the SDWA is protecting drinking water at its source and it is something that our agency sees as critical to ensuring clean water in our state.” As part of its work on source water protection, DPH established a Source Water Collaborative in Connecticut that brings together federal, state, and local governments with water utilities and non-governmental organizations all focused on drinking water.

Connecticut’s drinking water supply includes both surface water and groundwater supplies. “In addition to our broader responsibilities to protect and manage all water resources in CT, our department also oversees the CT Aquifer Protection Area (APA) Program, which protects public groundwater supplies” **stated Graham J. Stevens, Chief, Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse, DEEP.** “Celebrating both the 50th Anniversary of the SDWA and the 20th Anniversary of the CT APA Regulations this year has provided an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come and what we have left to do to ensure that CT has abundant drinking water. And there is always more work to do.”

For more information on the Water Planning Council and the State Water Plan go to: [Water Planning Council](#). To view virtual workshops offered by the Outreach and Education programs go to [WPC Outreach and Education](#).