

Draft 6-13-22

To: Sen. Flexer and Rep. Fox, Co-Chairs, GAE Committee

Cc: Valentina Melmehti, Clerk of the GAE Committee

Re: GAE Land Conveyances

Dear Sen. Flexer and Rep. Fox,

On behalf of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group, we would like to thank you for including the supplemental questionnaire on land characteristics and use with the standard CGA conveyance questionnaire this year. We believe it helped garner important information needed for protection of source-water watersheds and recharge areas. We appreciate all your efforts in this regard.

To continue efforts to alert the public on land conveyance bills, we hope that in following years, the questionnaire and supplement will be posted on the CGA website prior to the deadline for submission of written testimony for a bill's public hearing. Also important, would be inclusion in the language of the bill relevant information that is available in the questionnaires. For example, if the present use of the property and the projected use are both stated in the questionnaire, this information should appear in the bill as well. The reason is not just to inform the public but also to represent in the statute the intention of the conveyance, conditions if any, and so forth. Overall, an application must be complete, with all requested information included, before it is moved forward.

As you know from the testimony, in reviewing this year's land conveyance bills, several concerns were raised. One concern was that, in general, the legislative language did not reflect that the conveyances were "in the public benefit." As water protection advocates, in considering the public interest, we would look for assurance that the public trust in water would be honored. Although many proposed conveyances do not involve significant water resources, if there is an obvious risk to public water (for example, if the conveyance is in the watershed of a reservoir), this risk should be accounted for in the bill, and avoided or lessened. Finally, we support the use of a reverter clause stipulating that if the proposed future use of the proposed conveyance is not met, the land will revert back to the state.

We hope we can continue these discussions and do appreciate your support of protecting source water and aquifer protection lands.

Wishing you a pleasant summer.

Sincerely,

Alicea Charamut and Dan Lawrence, Co-chairs

Water Planning Council Advisory Group