State Water Plan Recommendations

SECTIONS 5.2, 5.3, 5.5

Section 5.2 Water Management Policies

The policy recommendations in Section 5.2 represent consensus-based decisions; the topics were identified by stakeholders (via the Steering Committee) as those for which common ground could be identified across all water sectors, and the language was developed collaboratively by stakeholders serving on the Policy Subcommittee.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Land Use Practices and Protection Related to Water

- **Public Water Supply Lands:** Reaffirm support for the protection of Class I and Class II lands, as well as watershed property protected for water supply.
- **State Conservation and Development (C&D) Plan:** Review the State C&D Plan to ensure that the initiatives and recommendations of each are synchronized and/or complementary.
- **Low-Impact Development:** In coordination with recommended Public Outreach programs, help educate Connecticut citizens about the benefits of Low-Impact Development using LID tools and practices already available.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Land Use Practices and Protection Related to Water

- **Groundwater Protection:** The state should promote groundwater protection through land management programs such that groundwater classifications of GA and GAA can be more widely understood and maintained.
- **Encourage the use of local development tools:** Through training, information and regulation encourage local governments to incorporate best management practices for water demand management, water efficiency, and water conservation into land-use decisions.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Land Use Practices and Protection Related to Water

- **Examine barriers in state law for implementing the above local development tools:** Over the next several years, examine barriers local jurisdictions may face while implementing local development tools and utilize Council of Governments to support development of tools and ordinances.
- **Strengthen partnerships**: To be successful in integrating land-use and water planning, the state will need to partner with many different agencies and groups, both internally and externally.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Water Quality and Quantity Management

- **Evaluate Effects:** Evaluate the positive and negative effects to water quality associated with proposed water management solutions. Identification of those effects will help define the scope of strategies that entities need to explore to protect and restore water quality.
- **Define Opportunities:** The state may define opportunities for projects that restore and enhance existing water quality conditions.
- **Evaluate Green-Infrastructure:** Define green-infrastructure approaches, and explore ways in which entities can use green infrastructure to address water quality.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Water Quality and Quantity Management

- **Project Design and Operation:** Examine ways to design and operate new or existing supply projects to advance water quality protection and enhancement.
- **Reuse Examples:** Identify the role of reuse by developing a library of reuse examples, such as non-potable reuse, graywater use, and the associated water quality issues for each type of reuse.
- **Stormwater Management:** Explore the role of stormwater management from both a quality and a quantity perspective in order to determine whether stormwater is a viable additional source of non-potable supply to address out-of-stream needs.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Water Quality and Quantity Management

- **Nonpoint Sources:** Address nonpoint sources through ongoing management activities, which play an important role in protecting and restoring water quality for the benefit of future water uses.
- **Climate Change:** Identify the risks of climate change as they relate to integrated water quality and water-quantity management. Develop specific recommendations for addressing these risks.
- **Requirements:** Explore how entities can most efficiently and cost-effectively integrate the Clean Water Act requirements and Safe Drinking Water Act requirements. Develop specific implementation recommendations.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Water Quality and Quantity Management

- **Solution Oriented Actions:** Continue to engage in creative, solution-oriented actions, such as implementing site-specific standards, temporary modifications, discharger-specific variances, pollutant trading, and conditional 401 water quality certifications; see Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.
- **Regulations:** Review and appropriately modify existing regulations, guidance, and policy documents for new types of wastewater reuse so that revisions will protect public health and the environment, while also providing sufficient flexibility for water providers and water users to develop or promote new water-reuse projects across the state.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Water Quality and Quantity Management

- **Monitoring and Assessment:** Continue investment in statewide monitoring that supports assessment of the quality- and quantity-integration goals and measures.
- **Consider Trading Programs:** Investigate the potential to develop water quality trading programs. Innovations on water quality trading can promote improvements in water quality from agriculture in lieu of expensive water treatment costs.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Water Conservation

- **Water conservation education outreach**: It is recommended that the state, in coordination with water utilities and their customers, develop an education and outreach strategy that includes water conservation topics.
- **Existing Conservation Plans:** It is recommended that the state consider undertaking a broad review of existing conservation program implementation and identify opportunities for improvement.
- **Adopt conservation incentives**: It is recommended that the WPC adopt policies stating that water providers may conduct comprehensive, integrated water-resource planning geared toward implementing water conservation best practices for all customer classes (residential, industrial, commercial) and both public and private water suppliers at high customer participation levels.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Water Conservation

- **Passive conservation savings**: It is recommended that the state document expected passive conservation savings and to track it over time.
- **Support water management activities for all water providers**: It is recommended that the state evaluate the funding, technical support, and training necessary to assist water providers in improving the management of their water systems.
- **Explore incentives for outdoor water conservation measures**: As part of a broader funding strategy, it is recommended that the state work with stakeholders to explore possibilities for tax-credit programs or other incentives for reducing outdoor water use.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Water Conservation

- **Support local water smart model ordinances**: It is recommended that the state provide training that supports local regulatory efforts that shape the ways in which water utilities respond to droughts (in coordination with the State Drought Plan), and also ways in which new construction interacts with water use.
- **Evaluation of barriers to green-building and infrastructure:** It is recommended that the state work together with existing agencies to determine which state agencies govern green infrastructure and green-building, identify barriers, and work with the appropriate agencies to adapt regulations to allow for graywater, green infrastructure, on-site water recycling and other aspects of green developments.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Water Conservation

- **Work with Green Industry to support water-efficient landscapes:** It is recommended that the state collaborate with irrigation associations, landscape contractors, landscape architects and designers, urban arborists, landscape-related businesses, environmental groups and property management companies to implement water-efficient landscape installations and maintenance.
- **Strengthen partnerships:** It is recommended that the state consider partnerships between the following example groups to reach water conservation goals.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Consistency with Existing State Plans

- **Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) plans**
- **Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies**
  - **Previous State of Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan 2005-2010**
  - **Other Considerations for the next State of Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan:**
- **Economic Development Strategy**
- **Green Plan**
- **Connecticut Climate Change Preparedness Plan**

Recommended Water Management Policies

Consistency with Existing State Plans

- **Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan**
- **Comprehensive Energy Strategy**
- **Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**
- **Input to the Sustainable CT Plan**
- **Drought Preparedness and Response Plan**
- **Input to updates of the Connecticut Department of Transportation Strategic Long-Range Transportation Plan**
- **Water Planning Council involvement in future statewide plan revisions and updates**

Recommended Water Management Policies

Monitoring for Plan Implementation

- **Track Against Goals:** Develop a method of assessing future decisions in the context of the Plan, its goals/requirements, and its recommendations.
- **Monitor Against Statute:** State Statue PA 14-163 lists 17 requirements for the Plan. These requirements served as the basis for the formulation of Plan recommendations, through consensus-building with stakeholders.
- **Updates to Plan:** The Plan will recommend periodic updates and revisions. It is recommended that the Water Planning Council update the Plan every five years and advise the state legislature at least two years in advance of planned updates so that resources and processes can be established and secured.
- **Identify Funding Mechanisms:** The Plan will identify potential funding mechanisms for Plan implementation and periodic revisions so that costs can be shared equitably.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Monitoring for Plan Implementation

- **Redefine Roles and Responsibilities:** To help with these recommendations, the Water Planning Council should:
  - Seek to redefine its own responsibility/authority to oversee the implementation of the Plan, direct future periodic revisions, and secure funding for associated activities.
  - Upon disbanding of the Steering Committee, establish or designate a standing advisory committee to assist the Water Planning Council with Plan implementation.
  - Review, assess and as necessary, redefine the role of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG).
  - Clearly define specific roles for each of the four Water Planning Council branches during Implementation phases of the Plan, as well as future revisions.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Agricultural Practices

- **As included in the Water Quality Policy Recommendation:** evaluate the positive and negative impacts to water quality associated with proposed water management solutions, which focus primarily on water quantity and agricultural conservation.
- **Quantification of Water Use by various agriculture activities**
- **Create Incentives for Water Quality and Reuse Innovation**
- **Build Partnerships:** Identify innovative solutions through partnerships

Recommended Water Management Policies

Obsolete Registered Water Diversions

- **Reporting: I**nformation on unused registrations and permits has not been included in the maps of basin stress risks in the Plan, because these are based either on current use patterns, or projected demand for the next 25 years, which is often much lower than the full volume of the unused registrations.
- **Unused Diversion Registrations:** The state should consider a means of identifying whether a diversion registration quantity is obsolete in whole, and if so, removing it from the record.
- **Obsolete Registration Quantities:** As a second step, the state should consider a means of identifying whether the quantity associated with a diversion registration is obsolete in whole or in part.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Obsolete Registered Water Diversions

- **Prudent Planning Targets:** the upper limit on expected water use be based on the future demand projections, and not include unused diversions beyond those (knowing that it is assumed that if demand is expected to increase in any basin, that the water would potentially be extracted using portions of currently unused registrations and permits)

Recommended Water Management Policies

Implementation of Minimum Stream Flow Regulations

- **Only contains an acknowledgment of several facts**

Recommended Water Management Policies

Outreach, Education and Public Engagement

- **Create a new outreach, education, and public engagement framework**
- **Create a data-based water education plan**: The state should create a data-based water education plan to reach key constituencies that may not be active in the Plan development process, such as the general public, municipal government officials and Connecticut State Legislators.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Regionalization

- **Opportunities for Municipal Involvement in Broader Initiatives**
  - outreach to municipal governments when utility water supply plans are being prepared as there is in the WUCCs process.
  - Where appropriate, encourage, support, **Section 5** and/or incentivize (monetarily or otherwise) inter-municipal negotiations on water sharing, either on an emergency or permanent basis, encourage municipal cooperation when identifying land for open space and recreational use, and support the involvement of the regional Councils of Government.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Class B Water for Non-Potable Use

- **Non-Potable Uses: C**urrent and future non-potable uses of water be reviewed by individual users (with input from utilities and state agencies and coordination with the Siting Council when applicable) to determine if Class B water could be an environmentally prudent and cost-effective alternative to higher quality water.
- **WPC Guidelines for Non-Potable Use of Class B Waters:** WPC provide guidelines for review of Class B water for non-potable uses such that individual users and utilities can evaluate opportunities on a consistent basis, even though individual economic or environmental circumstances may prevail.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Class B Water for Non-Potable Use

- **Regulatory Requirements:** If there are regulatory requirements that inhibit non-potable uses of Class B waters, or if there is a lack of clarity in the process to use Class B waters, the WPC should explore whether these regulations should be changed or clarity can be defined.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Data Availability, Access, and Accuracy

- **Coordination of Data Collection and Monitoring**
  - **Coordinate Ongoing Monitoring**
  - **Centralize Data Storage for a Portal**
  - **Impact of Streamflow Regulations on available water**
  - **Private Well Records**
- **Public Water System Data:** Make additional planning data available from Individual Water Supply Plans while protecting security sensitive information to protect the safety and quality of water systems

Recommended Water Management Policies

Data Availability, Access, and Accuracy

- **Registrations:** Finalization and distribution of the reporting form required by Public Act 04-185. This will help accomplish collection of data in a standardized manner that will facilitate using it for future planning efforts.
- **Withdrawals:** Develop a reasonable policy that results in phased-in requirements for reporting that are not cost prohibitive or overly burdensome to public water systems and other types of water users.
- **Transfer of water among public water supply diversions and reservoirs: P**romote reasonably accurate estimation of surface water transfers. The water utilities will be responsible for these estimates; thus, their input – individually or via CWWA – will be important.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Data Availability, Access, and Accuracy

- **Other data gaps:** As time and funding permits, other data gaps should be identified and addressed.

Recommended Water Management Policies

Coordination with Water Utility Coordinating Committees (WUCCs)

- **Consistency between State Water Plan and Coordinated Water System Plans**
- **Issues, Needs, and Deficiencies Identified in the Final Water Supply Assessment reports for the West, Central, and East regions that are germane to the Plan should be considered:**
- **Findings, Challenges, Options, and Recommendations Identified in the Plan should be recognized and considered in the Integrated Reports**
- **The WUCCs May Become Vehicles for Implementation of Some State Water Plan Recommendations:**