



**Public Health Committee, Energy & Technology  
Committee, Environment Committee, and Planning &  
Development Committee**

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 98% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

**Connecticut State Water Plan**

CCM has had the opportunity to review the report of the State Water Plan and has previously provided comments on the draft of the State Water Plan during the public comment period at PURA. While the plan is a comprehensive approach for Connecticut's water usage, CCM intends to focus our comments today specifically on the inclusion of "public trust doctrine" language within the plan.

CCM opposes including the "public trust doctrine" in the State Water Plan and its applicability for balancing water uses. **We urge you to reject any reference to the public trust doctrine in the State Water Plan.** As stated, CCM previously provided comments on the draft, however at such time, our comments did not include any reference to the public trust doctrine because the proposed plan that was noticed to the public did not contain any reference to the doctrine. The language was added after the public comment period. The 11th hour inclusion of this language was not in the spirit of a public process and therefore should be removed.

The reference to public trust in the Plan misapplies the public trust reference in the preamble to the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) to the balancing of water uses. Under an expanded Public Trust Doctrine, registered and permitted diversions and other established water rights could be modified or revoked without compensation regardless of how this will impact the availability of water supplies needed to support public health, fire suppression, agriculture and economic development. The inclusion on this language will have the unintended consequence of jeopardizing the availability of water supplies needed to, among other things, plan and move forward with state and local economic development projects, housing developments, shopping centers, and business expansion.

Furthermore, CCM believes that such a significant change in policy should be debated and considered by the full legislature and not promulgated by a regulatory agency without any statutory authority to do so.

**CCM urges the Committees to direct the Water Planning Council to remove any reference to the public trust doctrine.**

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If you have any questions, please contact Donna Hamzy, Advocacy Manager of CCM at dhamzy@ccm-ct.org or (203) 843-0705.