



COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

GOAL FOR 2017 SESSION

At a time when our environment is under severe attack at the federal level, the responsibility for protecting and preserving our precious natural resources is now being left entirely up to the states. Connecticut must NOT weaken our existing environmental laws, or roll back funding that is so desperately needed to protect the environment. Now, more than ever, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is needed to **objectively report on environmental issues and attend to citizen's concerns. CEQ must be left entirely intact, both in statute and in the state budget.**

WHY IS IT CRITICAL TO PRESERVE THE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY?

As a statutorily authorized and state funded “watchdog” organization, the CEQ provides critical information on specific problems with which the state is currently grappling, or of which it may not even be aware. The Council’s “state of the environment” report, Environmental Quality in Connecticut is widely recognized as being a consistently accurate and objective assessment. **The CEQ is the ONLY government entity able to effectively report on how well our state is doing in protecting our land, air, water, wildlife, and climate.**

It is important to note that CEQ’s annual report generally displays ten years of data, but the CEQ **maintains data going back 30 years** or more. In a data-driven world, the discarding of this amount of valuable historical data would be an action that would soon be regretted, especially since no such report is produced by DEEP, nor by any other organization in our State.

The CEQ’s **“Special Reports” have helped focus both governmental and public attention on serious problems**, which has in turn helped us to identify solutions and correct deficiencies in state environmental laws and programs. Reports have been prepared on a range of issues, including water quality, protection of state conservation lands, invasive species, illegal tree cutting, land boundary encroachments, ATVs, air quality permits, gravel mining, mercury pollution, environmental regulation and the growth of small businesses, modernizing the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act, conservation of inland wetlands, goals for state parks, and exposure to toxic chemicals.

Navigating our state’s regulations and the jurisdictions of various state agencies can be confusing and overwhelming, leaving residents unable to participate in resolving issues in their town or region. The

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CEQ is an accessible and efficient entity to which citizens can bring complicated issues and get answers. CEQ offers unsurpassed knowledge and institutional “memory” to understand and address issues—**no other entity in the state provides this critical service** for people and the environment.

The CEQ also **produces a bimonthly Environmental Monitor to ensure transparency of our state’s actions regarding projects, permits and enforcement.** The keys to being able to produce these and other CEQ reports are independence and adequate (though modest) resources. The reporting indicators used are statistically sound and have been designed over many years with the objective input of expert Council members—**expertise delivered at no expense to the state.** The nine appointed Council **members serve as volunteers.**

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NOW?

The elimination of the CEQ from Connecticut statutes and/or budget would be a travesty, leaving taxpayers in the dark and our state open to the worst, unchecked attacks on Connecticut’s increasingly threatened natural resources. It is a **critical link between Government and taxpayers.** As such, the **CEQ must be safeguarded** to continue investigating and helping resolve hundreds of citizen complaints, identifying environmental concerns and solutions, and furthering governmental transparency.

*For more information
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Council on Environmental Quality

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