



State of Connecticut

SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
SENATE REPUBLICAN OFFICES

January 17, 2018

The Honorable Jack Betkoski
Chair, Water Planning Council
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

Re: State Water Plan

Dear Commissioner Betkoski and members of the Water Planning Council:

It has come to our attention that the Water Planning Council is voting on the Final Draft of the State Water Plan on January 19, in accordance with Public Act 14-163.

PA 14-163 was carefully drafted to ensure that the State Water Plan appropriately balances the need to protect the availability of public water supplies to meet the state's present and future public health, safety and economic development needs as well as environmental and other needs. To ensure that the Plan achieves this goal, the public act emphasized the need for a collaborative stakeholder process to build consensus on the Plan's recommendations.

Although the WPC did engage a broad range of stakeholders in developing the State Water Plan, it is our understanding that the Final Draft of the State Water Plan has been revised at the last minute with a substantive change that incorporates language relating to water resources and the public trust. This is a complex legal issue that has been the subject of considerable litigation throughout the country and raises serious concerns regarding whether it will be construed in ways that will impede the water use rights of agriculture, business and industry. It may well warrant further discussion through the Water Planning Council but it should **not** be included in the State Water Plan at this time.

Given Connecticut's ongoing budget challenges, we must refrain from enacting policies that would have a negative impact on the state's business climate and economic growth. Clearly, policies that may be construed in ways that will impose additional regulatory burdens on business or create uncertainty regarding the ability to rely on public water supplies, will undermine the state's economy.

The Honorable Jack Betkoski
January 17, 2018
Page 2

In addition, to ensure that the State Water Plan achieved the goals outlined in Public Act 14-163, the state has invested a considerable amount of time and funding into the development of a State Water Plan. Interjecting a controversial issue such as the public trust at this late stage may undermine the approval of a Plan that is vital to the state's efforts to protect water resources. Accordingly, as leaders in the State Senate, we respectfully request that the WPC remove the references to the "public trust from the Final Draft prior to its delivery to the General Assembly.

Thank you for your attention and the anticipated cooperation of the WPC with respect to the important request.

Sincerely,



Len Fasano
Senate Republican
President Pro Tempore



Kevin Witkos
Deputy Senate Republican
President Pro Tempore