Citizens Campaign for the Environment supports approval of the CT State Water Plan, as written. The State Water Plan (hereafter “the plan”) was established under P.A. 14-163 to create a comprehensive water management plan to inform future policy making related to Connecticut’s water resources. The plan includes detailed data briefs, key concepts and policy recommendations designed to ensure that Connecticut’s water supply is protected and managed equitably for years to come. The final water plan is a consensus-based document grounded in good scientific data, and it offers a significant step forward in meeting Connecticut’s near-term and future water supply needs sustainably- including ensuring ample high quality water supplies to support healthy rivers and streams.

The State Water Plan took over a year to finalize, at a cost of more than $1 million in state funds to complete. The process engaged a diverse group of stakeholders and provided multiple opportunities for public comment. The final plan includes good faith compromise language that was agreed to by all parties and unanimously approved by the Water Planning Council (WPC) in January of 2018.

**Water as a Public Trust Resource**

One of the key concepts referenced in the plan was the recognition of water as a “public trust resource” under CGS 22a-15. This policy establishes the foundational values of water and natural resource management in our state, as a process that inherently requires meaningful public engagement. Additionally, it recognizes the public’s right to participate, and if necessary, to intervene in actions that put the state’s natural resources at risk of undue harm.

Multiple public meetings were held, in addition to a 120-day public comment period to ensure that all stakeholders had ample opportunity to weigh in on this important process. *The prevailing theme identified in comments from the general public was that water is inherently a public resource, and that it should be reflected as such in the final State Water Plan.* This fair and transparent process was central to the mission of the water plan and deserves to be honored.

CCE has conducted significant outreach and public education on this issue in the months following the plan’s development, and has continually demonstrated that members of the public remain in support of water as a public trust resource. Since early May of 2018, CCE generated more than 13,500 signatures from Connecticut residents, urging members of the CT General Assembly to approve the final water plan, and to ensure that the plan recognizes water as a public trust resource. Additionally, CCE generated more than 5,500 handwritten letters to that effect to individual members of the CGA, including leadership in each of the four committees of cognizance. **The citizens of Connecticut have waited long enough. The public has a right to clean water and a fair and equitable process.** CCE urges Connecticut lawmakers to support the process carried out by the CT Water Planning Council by approving the State Water Plan as written.