

Dear Sirs and Madams,

I am sending this testimony to the Conservation Sub-Committee of Appropriations for the Public Hearing scheduled for March 2, regarding the proposed \$285,000 budget cut that will impact statewide conservation agencies.

As Chairman of the Somers Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission for many years (member 25 years), I can attest to the huge service the North Central Conservation District provides for Somers. We depend on the district for our part-time soil and wetlands agent, and this cut will have a huge impact on us and the many small towns that pay for this service--- which could be eliminated with a budget cut. We are also aware of the many other services provided by these agencies in the area of resource conservation.

Certainly in the "big picture" \$285,000 is a miniscule amount of money that the state will save, yet the impact on the many small agencies and on conservation efforts throughout the state will be great. If we want to clean up Long Island Sound, why involve the very agencies that work constantly to ensure water quality?

Losing state funding will also cause a loss in federal grant funding. Then the state puts itself in the position of having to fund efforts itself at a much greater cost than this \$285,000 cut. This makes little sense.

The Conservation Districts are working with bare-bones budgets as it is, and it would seem that there are other agencies in the state that could certainly tighten their belts a little more than these agencies can afford to do.

Please do not approve this spending cut.

Sincerely,

Joan Formeister

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