



10 February 2016

State of Connecticut Legislature's Appropriations Committee
Conservation & Development Subcommittee *public hearing at 6:30 pm*
Legislative Office Building (Room 2C) Hartford, CT
APPtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Re: opposition to proposed FY 2017 Midterm Budget Adjustments
Conservation and Development Testimony, 2/10/16

To whom it may concern,

Please protect funding for state environmental protection, along with budget transparency. Citizens and state environmental groups are already extremely concerned with years of budget cuts that have reduced funding for state environmental programs and scientists. The CT DEEP includes a long list of functions categorized as Energy, Environmental Quality, Natural Resources, Outdoor Recreation and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority. The specific intent and implications of budget cuts need to be openly reviewed and reviewed by citizens to ensure that important state environmental protection functions are not excessively compromised.

For several decades, US EPA has encouraged the formation of regional watershed stewardship organizations in order to increase local environmental conservation and management. Note however that organizations like Park Watershed, or the numerous (> 50) environmental organizations throughout the state, cannot replace full time scientists and engineers who work for the State of Connecticut.

Park Watershed is a 501c3 urban-suburban watershed stewardship organization for Park River watershed, which stretches east of the Metacomet Ridge through MDC reservoir properties to the Connecticut River. West Hartford, Hartford and Bloomfield as well as parts of Newington, New Britain, Farmington and Wethersfield are within this 78 square mile regional watershed. Our organizational goal is to improve the water quality and ecosystem health of water courses and water bodies that enhance neighborhood character even within high-density urban development.

The shocking national news from Flint, Michigan highlights the importance of not minimizing our state staff who we need, and trust, to protect environmental quality. As budgets tighten, it is easy to assume that reducing funding for environmental protection is an easy way to save. However, note being unaware or unprepared for environmental disasters will cost far more.

Sincerely,

Mary Rickel Pelletier
Founding Director