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Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District, Inc.

February 10, 2016

**To: The Honorable Beth Bye, Senate Chairman of Appropriations Committee  
The Honorable Toni E. Walker, House Chairman of Appropriations Committee  
All Appropriations Committee Members**

**Re: REQUEST TO MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR CT COUNCIL ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION AND THE FIVE (5) CT CONSERVATION DISTRICTS AS A SEPARATE LINE ITEM**

There is no doubt that the Governor's proposed 5.75% cut will be a painful cut to all budgets that directly support Connecticut's land and water protection programs.

The challenge will be to utilize available resources efficiently and cost-effectively. Connecticut's Five (5) Conservation Districts and the CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation are presently able to assist in meeting that challenge but **need, and depend on** continued state funding. We cannot depend on funding with DEEP in control of funding for Districts and the Council. We need a separate line item.

The new block grant strategy buries funding for Connecticut's Five (5) Conservation Districts and the CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation in a line item in DEEP's Conservation & Development budget, listed in the FY 2017 Governor's Midterm Budget Adjustments on page A-26, line 12561. Last year the Appropriations Committee approved \$270,000 to fund Districts and the Council in FY 2016-2017. A 5.75% cut would reduce this to \$254,475 or \$42,412 per district/council. However with the we will not know how bad this cut will be to operations of the Conservation Districts and the Council on Soil and Water Conservation. Last year DEEP did not support District and Council funding, and with further cuts DEEP is likely continue to support agency operations and cut District and Council funds completely.

The State funds approved by the Appropriations Committee directly support District and Council operations in carrying out soil and water conservation programs to protect water quality in the Connecticut River Watershed and Long Island Sound, and are extremely important for leveraging Federal funds; for example State funding is presently targeted for use as match for CT programs that are part of a \$10,000,000 grant from USDA NRCS for water quality and land protection in the Long Island Sound Watershed.

I respectfully urge you to maintain funding for Connecticut's Five (5) Conservation Districts and the CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation as a separate line item.

Sincerely,

*Thomas M. ODell*

Thomas M. ODell  
Chairman,  
District Board of Directors