



**TESTIMONY
ELIZABETH GARA
CONNECTICUT WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

RE: HB-5005, AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA), which represents municipal, regional and private water companies throughout Connecticut, appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed budget as it pertains to the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the state Department of Public Health (DPH).

As stewards of the environment, Connecticut's public water suppliers are committed to providing residents and businesses with safe, high quality public water supplies at a reasonable cost. Accordingly, CWWA representatives actively participated in the efforts of Governor Lamont's Interagency PFAS Working Group to develop an Action Plan for addressing concerns regarding per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, generally referred to as PFAS.

CWWA supports the provisions in the Governor's proposed budget which are aimed at addressing concerns regarding the effects of PFAS, including the creation of a Safe Drinking Water Advisory Council comprised of scientists and other stakeholders to develop guidelines for PFAS and drinking water, develop a takeback program to assist firefighters in replacing PFAS containing firefighting foam with safe alternatives, and direct DEEP to perform surface water and sediment sampling.

As proposed, Governor Lamont's budget includes the following funding to assist state agencies in addressing PFAS issues:

- \$354,000 for DEEP to initiate statewide surface water and sediment sampling;
- \$282,599 to enhance DPH's staffing and operating resources to provide toxicological expertise to assist with updating standards and action levels for drinking water, review environmental laboratories to become approved for PFAS testing, and implement PFAS testing of drinking water at the state's Public Health Laboratory;
- \$100,000 for consulting services to assist the Safe Drinking Water Advisory Council (SDWAC) in its work, which will include making recommendations to the Commissioner

of Public Health regarding the adoption of maximum contaminant levels for emerging contaminants, including PFAS in drinking water.

- \$120,520 for the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to replace foam containing PFAS with a fluorine free substitute and to purchase new firefighting foam nozzles for use in the eight state-owned foam trailers managed by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control;
- \$2 million bond authorization for the purposes of a municipal takeback program of firefighting foam containing PFAS and for the testing for pollution from PFAS in private wells; and
- \$500,000 from the Capital Equipment Purchase Fund for DPH to purchase additional laboratory equipment.

In addition, \$750,000 in bond funding was recently authorized to assist DEEP in implementing anti-pollution controls and improvements at five old state-supervised landfills, including two known to be leaking hazardous man-made chemicals known as PFAS.

➤ **Safe Drinking Water Advisory Council**

CWWA supports the establishment of a Safe Drinking Water Advisory Council (SDWAC) to provide guidance in developing drinking water standards, provided such standards adhere to the appropriate rulemaking process pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act. This will ensure an opportunity for public comment and consideration of the implications of any proposal on various constituents. Given the complexity and costs associated with determining scientifically based drinking water standards for PFAS, and the potential implications for residents, municipalities, and businesses in the state, the establishment of this council will ensure that standards are developed using a collaborative process that relies on the expertise of toxicologists, hydrologists, scientists, engineers, and other water professionals.

➤ **Comprehensive Approach to PFAS Regulation Necessary**

The funding in the proposed budget recognizes that given the wide range of possible contributors of PFAS in the environment, a comprehensive approach is necessary to 1) prevent the introduction of PFAS in the environment, including the land, air, and water; and 2) determine areas that have been contaminated with PFAS compounds and remediate such areas. Preventing the introduction of PFAS in the environment and remediating areas contaminated with PFAS compounds is the most cost-effective way of protecting the quality and safety of Connecticut's public water supplies.

➤ **Testing & Remediation of Landfills and Other PFAS Generators**

In addition to providing funding to DEEP to initiate statewide surface water and sediment sampling, the proposed budget should target funding to ensure that DEEP investigates possible generators of PFAS contamination, including those identified by public water utilities in the PFAS vulnerability assessments submitted to DPH, such as existing and former landfill sites, metal plating industries, airports, fire training areas, paper mills, car washes and chemical manufacturing sites, and abate them accordingly.

In particular, DEEP has acknowledged that landfills across the state are potential sources of ground- and drinking-water contamination from PFAS. Although \$750,000 in bond funding has been made available to address issues regarding state-owned closed landfills, the PFAS Action Plan recommends widespread testing and monitoring of closed landfills across the state. Accordingly, testing and remediation of landfill must be a priority in the proposed budget.

➤ **Comprehensive Health Effects Data**

As acknowledged during the Interagency Working Group meetings, the state needs to develop and utilize comprehensive health effects data regarding PFAS exposure to ensure that the implementation of the Action Plan recommendations, including health advisory, action levels or maximum contaminant levels, are protective of the health and not based on unjustified or arbitrary factors. It does not appear that DPH has sufficient resources to develop comprehensive health effects data.

Again, Connecticut's public water suppliers are committed to ensuring the continued safety and quality of the state's drinking water. As acknowledged in the Action Plan, DPH and the state's public water suppliers have already taken a number of steps to address concerns regarding PFAS and drinking water. From 2013-2015, public water suppliers serving more than 10,000 customers monitored their drinking water sources for six perfluoroalkyl substances under the Safe Drinking Water Act Third Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR3). None of the public water suppliers had detections of any of the six substances above the UCMR3 minimum reporting limits.

In response to DPH' Circular Letter 2018-20, which directed public water suppliers to complete PFAS Vulnerability Assessments, nearly all of Connecticut's water companies serving 1000 or more customers have completed or are finalizing those assessments in order to identify risks and prioritize any testing.

Connecticut's public water suppliers stand ready to work with lawmakers and state regulators to develop appropriate measures to address concerns regarding PFAS compounds and drinking water.

The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWWA) is an association of private, municipal and regional public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut.