



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AGENDA 2026

PROTECTING WATER QUALITY

Connecticut's public water systems are committed to providing residents, businesses, and visitors with safe, high quality public water supplies at a reasonable cost. Public water systems are facing many water quality challenges, including:

Lead and Copper - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has adopted the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) and Lead & Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) which require public water systems to replace lead service lines (LSL) within ten years to address concerns regarding lead levels in drinking water. In addition, public water systems recently completed LSL inventories required pursuant to LCRR.

Lead and Copper - *CWWA supports the following recommendations:*

1. Ensure regulatory consistency between state and federal Lead Service Line (LSL) requirements to facilitate compliance.
2. Increase funding for the state's Healthy Homes program to assist customers in replacing their lead service lines.
3. Authorize mechanisms to allow for the timely recovery of costs of inventorying and replacing lead service lines.
4. Work with the state Department of Public Health (DPH) to develop public education and outreach materials concerning LSL replacement programs, including programs to assist consumers in identifying potential sources of lead in their homes, businesses, and institutional buildings and mitigating such risks.

PFAS – EPA finalized enforceable limits for six PFAS chemicals known to occur in drinking water. At the same time, DPH has adopted action levels for ten 10 PFAS substances. *CWWA supports the following recommendations:*

1. Work with DPH to provide public water systems and the public with clear communications and messaging concerning the risks of PFAS chemicals.
2. Exempt water and wastewater utilities from potential liability under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and comparable state provisions.
3. Provide public water systems with clear, consistent guidance and reasonable compliance timeframes to address any PFAS contamination, which may require significant capital costs on ongoing operating expenses for treatment or the development of additional water sources.
4. Identify funding gaps and target additional state and federal funding to assist public water systems in complying with any new state or federal requirements regarding PFAS, similar to New Hampshire and Massachusetts.
5. Authorize mechanisms to allow for the timely recovery of treatment costs to address PFAS contamination.



6. Continue to utilize a comprehensive approach to address concerns regarding PFAS, including a) preventing the introduction of PFAS in the environment by banning the use and manufacture of products that contain PFAS; and b) remediating areas, such as landfills, fire training facilities, and industrial facilities, which are contaminated with PFAS.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Water companies face significant costs in upgrading dams, treatment, and distribution systems to comply with new and emerging state and federal laws and regulations. In addition, water companies must upgrade and replace aging infrastructure to continue to provide safe, reliable drinking water. *CWNA supports the following recommendations:*

1. Streamline the administrative process for obtaining low interest financing and grants under the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to ensure that critical projects can move forward in a timely manner.
2. Improve the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection's (DEEP) dam permitting process by 1) enhancing the pre-application/intake process to ensure that parties have a thorough understanding of the scope of the project and timelines; 2) clarifying requirements applicable to sediment sampling; 3) prioritizing permit review based on high hazard, etc., and 4) expanding the activities, particularly maintenance and upkeep items, that may be undertaken pursuant to general permits.
3. Increase funding for the state's Public Water System Improvement Program to support critical infrastructure projects.
4. Identify funding gaps and target additional state and federal funding to assist public water systems in complying with state and federal requirements, including PFAS and LCRR/LCRI.
5. Ensure timely access to available infrastructure funds by exempting loans that do not exceed 5% of a water company's long-term debt from the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority's (PURA) formal review process, subject to compliance filings.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Connecticut's water companies employ approximately 5,000 people throughout the state in a wide range of operational, technical, and administrative positions. However, there have been an unprecedented number of retirements in the industry and water and wastewater utilities are struggling to find qualified applicants, including water and wastewater system operators. *CWNA supports the following recommendations:*

1. Address barriers facing individuals in obtaining operator certification, including eliminating the requirement that individuals must apply for requalification when retaking an exam.
2. Collaborate with the Technical High Schools to develop programs to train water and wastewater system operators.



3. Continue to support programs at the state's community colleges and universities that encourage and prepare students to pursue careers in the water sector, including the programs at Gateway Community College and Southern CT State University.

CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES

Public water systems are facing significant challenges in addressing climate impacts, including more intense storm events, rising sea levels, and changing weather patterns that result in increased flooding, drought conditions, and the need for greater infrastructure resiliency.

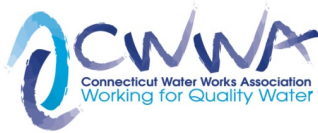
CWWA supports efforts to:

1. Collaborate with PURA and electric utilities to ensure that a water system's critical facilities are prioritized for power restoration during outages.
2. Update the State Water Plan to reflect advances in climate science and adaptation planning and a stronger focus on flood resilience.
3. Authorize emergency transfers of up to one million gallons per day for 30 days and modify the filing only General Permit to address short-term emergencies.
4. Ensure that public water systems are eligible for DEEP's Climate Resilience Funding and Loan Initiatives to support projects to upgrade infrastructure to provide greater resiliency and enhance treatment methods to protect the quantity, quality, and availability of public water supplies.
5. Assist public water systems in enforcing water use restrictions to respond to drought conditions.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Public water systems need to operate efficiently to meet their obligation to provide safe, high quality water to customers. *CWWA supports the following recommendations:*

1. Address delays in obtaining regulatory approvals for certain permits and other applications before the state Department of Public Health.
2. Ensure that encroachment permits administered by the state Department of Transportation do not improperly impose liability on public water systems for work performed by outside contractors.
3. Address concerns regarding changes to the proposed Comprehensive General Permit for Discharges to Surface and Groundwater.
4. Provide public water systems with more flexibility to meet cross connections compliance requirements.
5. Extend the existing law authorizing private water companies to lien property for unpaid water bills under certain circumstances to include unpaid wastewater bills.
6. Ensure that legislation to address the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) does not impede the ability of public water systems to use predictive modeling and other AI technologies.



STATE WATER PLANNING

In 2019, Connecticut adopted a comprehensive State Water Plan to guide decisions affecting Connecticut's water resources. The state has also completed the Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) process to inform planning decisions. *CWWA supports the following recommendations:*

1. Provide funding for streamline the process for obtaining authorization to use interconnections to increase operational flexibility, enhance resiliency, and address water supply issues, such as the extension of public water service to areas affected by contaminated private wells.
2. Ensure the continued availability of public water supplies in implementing the State Water Plan by clarifying the definition of a public water system's safe yield and margin of safety.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

Source water protection is critical to ensuring the safety and quality of Connecticut's public water supplies and reducing treatment costs and risks to public health. This is increasingly important given areas contaminated with PFAS and other substances. *CWWA supports the following recommendations:*

1. Although CWWA supports efforts to promote the use of renewable energy, the CT Siting Council should be required to notify water utilities of applications and consider the impact of siting solar installations and other renewable energy facilities on non-water company-owned watershed lands and how this may impact the quality and quantity of public water supplies.
2. Implement the recommendations of the Riparian Buffer Working Group to better regulate development in river corridors and floodplains and protect water resources from contamination.
3. Ensure that proposed high density housing developments on non-water company owned watershed land fully consider the impact on water quality.
4. Continue to support funding for the state's Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition program, which has been a successful tool in source water protection.
5. Continue to promote Green Snow Pro training and certification to reduce the use of deicing chemicals to help protect water sources and infrastructure from road salt contamination.
6. Support the Office of Invasive Species' efforts to control and eradicate invasive species/plants.



CYBERSECURITY

Cybersecurity threats continue to pose significant risks for businesses, including water companies. *CWWA supports the following recommendations:*

1. Assist public water systems in developing and implementing effective cybersecurity protocols.
2. Continue to provide public water systems with tools to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a cybersecurity incident, including training and response exercises, incident action checklists, vulnerability assessments, and technical assistance from state agencies in the event of a cybersecurity incident.

WATER/ENERGY NEXUS

Water treatment and distribution systems are highly energy intensive. Improving energy efficiency and reducing costs are critical to controlling costs and customer rates as well as promoting water conservation. *CWWA supports the following recommendations:*

1. Ensure that PURA's ratemaking policies reflect investments and operating expenses needed to support increased energy efficiency at water utilities.
2. Prioritize opportunities for water companies to reduce energy costs and improve energy efficiency by ensuring eligibility for the state's various energy programs.