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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

STATE WATER PLANNING COUNCIL

Regular Meeting held Via Teleconference on
September 5, 2023, beginning at 1:32 p.m.

H e l d B e f o r e :

JOHN W. BETKOSKI, III, CHAIRMAN,
and PURA VICE-CHAIRMAN

1 **A p p e a r a n c e s :**

2 **WATER PLANNING COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

3 **JOHN W. BETKOSKI, III, CHAIRMAN (PURA)**

4 **MARTIN HEFT (OPM)**

5 **LORI MATHIEU (DPH)**

6 **GRAHAM STEVENS (DEEP)**

7
8 **Others Present (of record):**

9 **VIRGINIA de LIMA**

10 **DENISE SAVAGEAU**

11 **ALICEA CHARAMUT**

12 **ERIC McPHEE**

13 **MICHAEL DIETZ**

14 **MARGARET MINER**

15 **ERIC LINDQUIST**

16
17 **Staff:**

18 **LAURA LUPOLI**

19

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1 (Begin: 1:32 p.m.)

2
3 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Good afternoon, everyone, and
4 welcome to the Water Planning Council meeting for
5 September 5th. I will call the meeting to order.

6 I hope everyone had a nice summer and a nice
7 Labor Day weekend. We have a very lengthy agenda
8 this afternoon, so let's get right to it.

9 The first order of business is the approval
10 of June 6, 2023, meeting transcript. Do I hear a
11 motion?

12 GRAHAM STEVENS: So moved.

13 MARTIN HEFT: Second.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Motion made and seconded that the
15 transcript for the June 6th meeting be approved.

16 Any questions on the motion?

17
18 (No response.)

19
20 THE CHAIRMAN: If not, all those in favor signify by
21 saying aye.

22 THE COUNCIL: Aye.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

24
25 (No response.)

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Motion carried.

2 Next is the public comment on --

3 MARTIN HEFT: Jack, may I? One thing we should
4 probably also -- because our July 12th, even
5 though it was a retreat, was actually a quorum of
6 this board.

7 And I know we don't have official minutes,
8 but we do have a meeting report, that I would make
9 a motion that we accept that meeting report as our
10 minutes of that meeting, which we did have a
11 quorum.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. As you said that I was actually
13 thinking that.

14 And Graham, will you second that?

15 GRAHAM STEVENS: I second that.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Motion made and seconded that we accept
17 the minutes of the July 12th retreat.

18 Any questions?

19 LORI MATHIEU: Yeah, a question.

20 Is that on the agenda?

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

22 LORI MATHIEU: Approval of these retreat meeting
23 minutes?

24 THE CHAIRMAN: On the agenda is the --

25 MARTIN HEFT: We have the water planning retreat on the

1 agenda under other business. We don't have it
2 specifically related as on the agenda itself. So
3 I suppose we could do a motion to add it to the
4 agenda, to approve the minutes.

5 LORI MATHIEU: I thought for us to take a vote on
6 anything it has to be part of the published
7 agenda. Maybe I'm wrong.

8 MARTIN HEFT: So we can. Officially we can. Because
9 it's not a special meeting we can vote by
10 two-thirds vote to add it to the agenda.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Do I hear a motion to that effect?

12 MARTIN HEFT: So if you'd like to do that, I'll hold my
13 first motion and make a motion to add July 12,
14 2023, our Water Planning Council retreat report to
15 the agenda to approve the transcript.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Do I hear a second?

17 LORI MATHIEU: Second.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Motion made and seconded that we add the
19 report of the July 12th retreat to the agenda for
20 consideration of approval of the minutes.

21 All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

22 THE COUNCIL: Aye.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

24
25 (No response.)

1 THE CHAIRMAN: The motion carried.

2 Now, Martin.

3 MARTIN HEFT: Thank you. Now we'll go back to the
4 original motion to approve the July 12, 2023,
5 meeting report from our retreat.

6 GRAHAM STEVENS: Second.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Motion made and seconded.

8 Do I hear any comments on the motion?

9
10 (No response.)

11
12 THE CHAIRMAN: If not, all those in favor signify by
13 saying aye.

14 THE COUNCIL: Aye.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

16
17 (No response.)

18
19 THE CHAIRMAN: The motion carried.

20 GRAHAM STEVENS: And while not on the agenda, I just
21 want a point out a personal privilege. Lori
22 Mathieu is now the associate parliamentarian for
23 our group.

24 MARTIN HEFT: I'll relinquish my hat.

25 LORI MATHIEU: No, no, no. No, no, no.

1 GRAHAM STEVENS: Don't say that, Martin.

2 LORI MATHIEU: No, no, no. Martin is -- he's the
3 expert on this. I'm just learning from Martin's
4 process that we should have everything on the
5 agenda -- which is important to do.

6 GRAHAM STEVENS: It is important.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, it is. Very good.

8 Okay. Public comment on agenda items. I see
9 that that we have received correspondence from the
10 Housatonic herbicide working group, and we have
11 Mr. Bennett on the --

12 MARTIN HEFT: Jack, one second. You have -- Denise
13 raised her hand, in case you didn't see it, under
14 public comment.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, Mr. Bennett is going to be under
16 public comment as well. So we'll get to Denise.

17 MARTIN HEFT: Okay. Because you have -- well, actually
18 the agenda is public comment first, and then
19 correspondence.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Public comment on agenda items? Okay.

21 MARTIN HEFT: Sorry.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: That's okay.

23 Denise, do you have something really burning
24 you have to say before we move on?

25 Or are you just saying hi?

1 DENISE SAVAGEAU: There we go -- trying to unmute.

2 Sorry about that.

3 Yes, I just wanted to quickly -- and when I
4 looked at the agenda, and I wasn't sure if this
5 was going to come up under the other business with
6 your water planning retreat, which I happened to
7 miss -- but I didn't see anything on the agenda
8 that has to do with funding, and it's such a
9 priority.

10 And it's that time of year where we needed to
11 start thinking about funding, and I know all the
12 agencies are putting their funding requests
13 together. So I just wanted to say I wasn't sure
14 you were going to take it up there, but I think
15 it's something.

16 So it's not on -- an item that's on the
17 agenda, but something that I think is missing and
18 should probably be on your next agenda, if not.

19 Because we need to -- we need to continue to
20 move forward on funding for the state water plan
21 implementation. Thank you.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Denise.

23 And I should say that under action items we
24 do have -- and it's not related to the state
25 budget. Martin is going to talk about the

1 possibility of a funding opportunity.

2 Is that correct, Martin?

3 MARTIN HEFT: Correct.

4 And then just to answer Denise's question
5 under next steps under water planning retreat,
6 that's where that would be discussed.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

8 Any other public comment, before we get to
9 public comment on agenda items? Any other public
10 comment? Any hands raised?

11
12 (No response.)
13

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Then we're going to -- we received some
15 correspondence from Mr. Bennett from the
16 Housatonic herbicide working group.

17 Good afternoon, Mr. Bennett. Would you like
18 to say hello and tell us, expand on your letter a
19 little bit?

20 BRUCE BENNETT: Yes. Thank you to the Planning
21 Councilmembers for giving me the time to do this.
22 And I heard you say that you have a busy agenda,
23 so I'll try not to be too long.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: That's okay. Please, you took the time
25 to be here. Speak.

1 BRUCE BENNETT: Thank you. So my name is Bruce
2 Bennett. I am a licensed pesticide applicator
3 with a grounds supervisory license. I am also a
4 licensed arborist that includes a supervisory
5 license that allows me to spray trees, anything
6 above 15 feet. The grounds license controls you
7 to anything 15 feet or below.

8 So I am not anti-pesticide and I am not
9 anti-herbicide, but we have a situation that is
10 involving many towns in Northwestern Connecticut
11 where the Housatonic River Railroad runs through
12 our towns. It runs from North Canaan, Falls
13 Village, Cornwall, Kent, and New Milford.

14 We have attempted -- the chemical cocktail
15 that they're using along the road -- and this is
16 what actually got us involved in this group, that
17 they applied along those tracks about five years
18 ago had killed a significant number of deciduous
19 as well as evergreen trees. The skeletons are
20 still laying along the track where they can easily
21 be seen.

22 And our concern was the chemical cocktail
23 that they were using in order to be able to
24 control the brush and weeds along the track. We
25 know that there needs to be maintenance of the

1 tracks and we understand that, however the
2 Housatonic River Railroad right-of-way runs
3 through these towns and multiple wetlands,
4 including the huge coniferous swamp in Canaan.

5 And when it gets down into Kent, it's running
6 through the large wetland area that is just south
7 of the town of Kent, and empties into a large
8 lake.

9 So that these chemicals are actually -- our
10 fear is that these chemicals are actually running
11 into the water systems, including the Housatonic
12 River and multiple class-A streams that feed the
13 Housatonic River.

14 We've approached the railroad in order to be
15 able to discuss our concerns, in order to be able
16 to perhaps have them follow the Massachusetts
17 guidelines -- which are excellent guidelines which
18 protect sensitive areas, wells, highly populated
19 areas as well as aquifers.

20 Two of the chemicals specifically on their
21 label warn that they can leach into the aquifers.
22 All of them warn about the damage to aquatic life.
23 In some places the railroad runs within six feet
24 of the edge of the rivers -- or in the case of
25 Hatch Pond, the pond -- and in a lot of other

1 places, ten feet.

2 So again, we're looking to be able to talk to
3 them about having them control or use best
4 practices with these herbicides, hopefully with
5 the responsibility of reducing the chemicals that
6 they're using.

7 To date they have refused to talk to us. In
8 fact, they've even refused to allow us to be able
9 to attend a meeting that they had with the First
10 Selectman in Cornwall, Connecticut, and with the
11 legislators. I think Maria Horn did not -- was
12 not able to come, but there was a meeting when
13 they discussed this.

14 They have agreed with the first selectman in
15 Cornwall not to use a chemical called Method 240,
16 which is absorbed by tree roots, killing the
17 trees, but they have not agreed not to use that
18 chemical in all the other towns.

19 So what we're doing is we're looking for your
20 support at this point, since we can't seem to
21 communicate with them, to be able to possibly
22 initiate legislative action to be able to control
23 what's going on with the railroad in order to be
24 able to stop the pollution of these wetlands and
25 these river areas.

1 I also have another issue that has really
2 just been brought up recently, and that is the --
3 what I would consider the abuse of herbicides
4 along our highways. And in Cornwall and Kent, and
5 Falls Village the State is spraying a weed along
6 the highways that's called native parsnip.

7 Now I don't know whether they think it's
8 hogweed, but native parsnip is a biennial weed
9 that has always grown along our highways. The
10 reason we haven't seen it before is that they
11 always mowed the highways, but now they've taken
12 to spraying herbicides aggressively on the
13 highways in order to do what they used to do for
14 mowing.

15 And I'm alarmed at what I would consider the
16 abuse of herbicides. They're spraying these in
17 ditches and culverts, and they're spraying rock
18 ledges that have a grass called fescue that only
19 grows six to eight inches tall.

20 So, I guess overall, our concern is that
21 these herbicides are being abused, and we need to
22 be able to push the users through legislation in
23 order to be able to get control over this before
24 it gets really out of control.

25 Thank you.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: It appears to me, Mr. Bennett, both of
2 these are State Department of Transportation
3 issues.

4 Are you saying that the State Highway
5 Department is putting this chemical on the state
6 roads?

7 BRUCE BENNETT: Yes, sir.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. And there, the railroad system is
9 under the auspices of the State Department of
10 Transportation. So I'm going to open it up to my
11 colleagues to see if they have any comments.

12 But to me -- and the other thing is, I would
13 think that DEEP would be certainly involved with
14 the quality, water quality issues -- but anybody
15 want to jump in here?

16 GRAHAM STEVENS: I'm happy to jump into the fray.

17 Bruce, nice meeting you. My name is Graham
18 Stevens. I'm with Connecticut DEEP.

19 The question primarily focused on DOT. Have
20 you had a chance to reach out to DOT directly? I
21 think what you were speaking about, the lack of
22 mowing; I don't think that the lack of mowing has
23 been directly translated into application of
24 herbicides or pesticides.

25 I think that they are trying to limit mowing

1 to where cars coming off the travel way would need
2 to come onto the shoulder. They may be using
3 herbicides -- and like you said, you know, in
4 certain, you know, swales or drainage ditches.

5 But I think that, you know, the DOT would be
6 open to looking at its practices and limiting the
7 use of herbicides or pesticides to where it's
8 needed most. And it may just be an issue of, you
9 know, training of the maintainers who are making
10 and doing those applications.

11 So the question is, have you had this
12 dialogue with the DOT as of yet?

13 BRUCE BENNETT: No, we have not.

14 GRAHAM STEVENS: Okay. I would suggest it. I feel
15 that the DOT is, you know, is really trying to
16 change its ways to be more sustainable. Right?

17 They have opened up, you know, hundreds of,
18 you know, pollinator habitat sites across the
19 state within this, the right-of-ways that they
20 maintain and have adapted their mowing practices
21 to try to encourage pollination and, you know,
22 better, you know, ecosystem benefits from their
23 land that they manage.

24 So I think that that is what I would
25 recommend with respect to the DOT. And if you're

1 not -- if they're not receptive to that, you can
2 feel free to e-mail me at Graham.Stevens@CT.gov,
3 and I would be happy to try to connect you with
4 someone who might be receptive.

5 BRUCE BENNETT: Can you tell me, who it is that I
6 should get in touch with?

7 GRAHAM STEVENS: Why not start off by writing a letter
8 to the Commissioner?

9 I don't know who to speak to directly.

10 BRUCE BENNETT: Okay.

11 GRAHAM STEVENS: But yeah, I think Commissioner
12 Eucalitto would be, I'm sure, happy to hear from
13 you. He's very proud of his habitat --

14 BRUCE BENNETT: Native habitat?

15 GRAHAM STEVENS: Pollinator habitat work. So yeah, I
16 would suggest reaching out to him.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: And he used to be, actually used to be
18 on the Water Planning Council, Commissioner
19 Eucalitto. And what I would say, Bruce, when you
20 send any kind of correspondence, copy me as Chair
21 of the Council so I can be aware of what's going
22 on.

23 And I also would address the whole rail issue
24 with him as well. I would do both.

25 BRUCE BENNETT: Yeah, yes. I knew that DOT was

1 controlling the right-of-way, or they were in
2 charge of it. So yeah. That's a great, great
3 suggestion. That, we will do that.

4 **THE CHAIRMAN:** I mean, I think he'd be, as Graham said,
5 I think he'd be receptive.

6 Martin or Lori, do you have anything to add?

7 **MARTIN HEFT:** Sure, I can add a couple things. And I
8 would agree with DOT. The Bureau of Highway
9 Operations is probably a good spot to start under
10 the DOT.

11 Bruce, I'd be happy -- I believe I may have
12 your e-mail. I could e-mail you the link to the
13 DOT page that has the proper divisions on it --

14 **BRUCE BENNETT:** Okay.

15 **MARTIN HEFT:** -- which would lead to the right bureau
16 chiefs to be able to contact under DOT.

17 In regards of legislation, this Council can't
18 really do the legislative process for you. But
19 what I can recommend is, you know, reach out to
20 the local legislators for, you know, the
21 representatives and senators in those particular
22 districts. Reach out to the, you know, the
23 transportation committee chairs, you know, in the
24 General Assembly.

25 And then also you may want to reach out to

1 your two regional councils of government that, you
2 know, that work for both your Western and
3 Northwest Hills COGs.

4 BRUCE BENNETT: Uh-huh?

5 MARTIN HEFT: Because those are made up of your
6 municipal officials.

7 They are -- also a number of them act through
8 metropolitan planning organizations that work with
9 the DOT with the roads, everything that way. So
10 just some extra people to get looped into your
11 whole process for helping to raise that awareness.

12 So those would be my suggestions, to just add
13 to what you know Graham and Jack have already
14 provided you.

15 BRUCE BENNETT: Thank you. If you could send me -- any
16 contacts that you can send me would be really
17 helpful so that I don't have to look around and
18 falter, trying to find my way through the system.

19 LORI MATHIEU: And also I would add -- the Department
20 of Public Health, Lori Mathieu, Branch Chief,
21 Environmental Health and Drinking Water.

22 Bruce, you struck home when you mentioned
23 water supply impacts. Years and years ago we
24 worked with DOT on an application of pesticides in
25 sensitive areas that might impact a public

1 drinking water supply source.

2 And I'm uncertain where their permitting is
3 right now to address those types of things where
4 there, these railroads could travel through a
5 public water supply watershed area, impact the
6 wetland that makes its way into a public drinking
7 water supply. Those are the types of things that
8 we had worked on with DOT years ago.

9 And also, if there's nearby wells and looking
10 at those areas of sensitivity to drinking water
11 would be an important aspect.

12 And Graham, I don't know if through your
13 permitting you permit these applications in some
14 sort of global way with DOT?

15 GRAHAM STEVENS: Yeah, that's a good question with
16 respect to our pesticide application. We do
17 license pesticide applicators, Lori. And that the
18 issue with pesticides sometimes is that the
19 federal rules with respect to, you know, use by
20 its label sometimes is all of what people need to
21 follow, and that's a bit of a problem.

22 And I think there may be -- I'm not sure of
23 the answer to your question, Lori. That's
24 something I can look into and get back to Bruce
25 directly on.

1 BRUCE BENNETT: Greatly appreciate it.

2 GRAHAM STEVENS: Sure thing.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Bruce, I appreciate you taking
4 the time to contact us and time to be with us
5 today.

6 And also, please keep us abreast so we can
7 assist you in any way to follow up from today's
8 meeting?

9 BRUCE BENNETT: Thank you for all your help and your
10 direction. I really appreciate it. Thank you.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: You're very welcome.

12 MARTIN HEFT: And Bruce, would you mind putting your
13 e-mail address into the chat so we have it?

14 BRUCE BENNETT: I will do that.

15 MARTIN HEFT: We also have a couple of links that we've
16 put in there, too, to the contacts -- but I'll be
17 happy to e-mail it to you. Just provide your
18 e-mail address. It would make it easier for us.

19 Thanks.

20 BRUCE BENNETT: We'll do. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Alecia, you have your hand up. Do you
22 have to make a comment?

23 ALICEA CHARAMUT: Yes, yes. And it has to do with
24 Mr. Bennett's communication.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Good.

1 ALICEA CHARAMUT: I'm taking off my co-chair hat and
2 I'm putting on my Rivers Alliance hat.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

4 ALICEA CHARAMUT: Just so everybody knows.

5 And I actually sat down with Mr. Bennett, and
6 in regard to the DOT spraying he showed me some
7 pictures. And it was really quite clear that the
8 drainage ditches, which is was what really raised
9 my eyebrows, were sprayed.

10 And I went through and I read the DOT
11 vegetation management guidelines from 2021, and it
12 was very clear that the inside of the drainage
13 ditches, the only thing that should be managed is
14 either side of the drainage ditch.

15 So the fact that you know this was being
16 sprayed is problematic. And I understand from the
17 top down they're really trying to do a good job
18 of, you know, treating these sensitive areas
19 better, but it seems very clear to me that, you
20 know, it isn't trickling all the way down to those
21 who are actually doing the work.

22 And when you have herbicides being sprayed
23 on/in drainage ditches it's a huge issue. And you
24 know, I really hope that if Mr. Bennett doesn't
25 get anywhere with DOT with the railways -- and I'm

1 questioning whether it would be a state DOT thing,
2 because it seems like the railways are managed
3 federally.

4 So would the State DOT?

5 **GRAHAM STEVENS:** I think the railways, Alecia, in the
6 state of Connecticut are owned by, almost all of
7 them are -- so they're either owned by Amtrak,
8 Connecticut DOT, or in one case the Valley
9 Railroad line, I think, twenty -- 21.5 miles is
10 owned by DEEP.

11 **ALICEA CHARAMUT:** So they're not the ones doing the
12 application?

13 **GRAHAM STEVENS:** They're leased, but they're not the
14 ones doing the application. In this case it's
15 subleased to the Housatonic Railroad Company, I
16 believe.

17 **ALICEA CHARAMUT:** All right.

18 Thanks for the clarification.

19 **GRAHAM STEVENS:** No worries.

20 **ALICEA CHARAMUT:** And that's all I've got.

21 **THE CHAIRMAN:** All right. Alecia, thank you.

22 Any other comments on this subject before we
23 move on?

24
25 (No response.)

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

2 Under action items we have the election of
3 WPC Chairman -- and we were supposed to do this in
4 June. We have not.

5 So we'll do it hopefully today.

6 MARTIN HEFT: May I make a motion, sir?

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

8 MARTIN HEFT: So I would like to make a motion that
9 pursuant to Section 25-33o, that we elect a
10 chairperson of the Water Planning Council for the
11 upcoming year.

12 And I nominate Jack Betkoski.

13 LORI MATHIEU: I second that nomination.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Motion made a seconded that --

15 GRAHAM STEVENS: I third that nomination.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: -- yours truly be chairman until next --
17 we were supposed to do this in June.

18 Right, Martin?

19 MARTIN HEFT: It's through June 30th, correct.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: June 30th, so.

21 MARTIN HEFT: Yeah. It takes effect July 1st.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: So this, this term would be through June
23 30th. And I am going to call for a vote.

24 All those in favor signify by saying aye.

25 THE COUNCIL: Aye.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

2
3 (No response.)
4

5 THE CHAIRMAN: The motion carried.

6 Thank you very much. I appreciate it. We'll
7 see what happens next June, but I just appreciate
8 everybody's support. It's been a long journey,
9 and I think that we make progress. We get
10 frustrated, but we're making steps.

11 And I think we'll talk about it later on -- I
12 think the retreat we had in July was just
13 wonderful, and I can't thank Virginia enough and
14 everybody that participated. So we'll talk more
15 about that later on, but I think we have a real,
16 real direction moving forward.

17 So thank you very, very much.

18 So moving on, we're going to go to the DOI
19 WaterSMART Cooperative Water Management Program
20 funding opportunity. Martin Heft?

21 MARTIN HEFT: So, thank you. So I just wanted to make
22 an announcement. Unfortunately, these funds won't
23 be something that the Water Planning Council can
24 necessarily apply for, but we did want to make
25 sure people are aware of it.

1 That you know, federally the Department of
2 Interior announced 40 million for WaterSMART
3 Cooperative Watershed Management Program phase
4 one. Eligible are states, tribes, special
5 districts, local authorities, nonprofits, higher
6 ed. The application process ends December 5th.
7 Grant amounts are up to 300,000 per applicant, and
8 to qualify it's supposed to be to develop a new
9 watershed group.

10 There's, like, three prerequisites. One is
11 sponsoring the development of the new watershed
12 group; having a substantial impact on, or being
13 affected by water quality within a watershed; and
14 three, possessing the capacity to encourage
15 sustainable water resource utilization. So those
16 are the requirements. There's three different
17 tasks levels in that.

18 I'm happy to, you know, forward the
19 information out to anyone that may be interested,
20 or want to forward this along to potential
21 applicants on this, so. But it is kind of, you
22 know, limited that it is for, you know, coming up
23 with, you know, a new watershed, you know,
24 management type group, you know, this program is.

25 There's a couple others that have come out

1 which aren't anything that, you know, related to
2 us. So I didn't bring those forward, but we'll
3 continue to watch what other grants might be
4 available out there and make sure that we continue
5 to forward these along, especially to a lot of our
6 stakeholders that are on here.

7 So that's why I wanted to at least bring that
8 up and make people aware of this opportunity.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Martin.

10 Any questions for Martin?

11 GRAHAM STEVENS: No, just to comment to say thank you
12 for bringing that to the Council. And I think you
13 know we need to think about, you know, assuring
14 that all of our stakeholders are aware of that
15 grant opportunity.

16 These things are coming thick and fast, so it
17 looks like a great opportunity.

18 Thank you, Martin.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Ali, I want to make sure that all of the
20 people there get notification.

21 When the agenda went out this was an
22 attachment, so I believe all the people that are
23 part of the stakeholders are all aware of it.

24 So it's a great opportunity. It's great.

25 Okay. Moving onto agency reports. WUCC,

1 Lori? WUCC and private wells, Lori?

2 LORI MATHIEU: Thank you, Jack.

3 Eric McPhee is on to talk briefly about the
4 WUCC. Eric?

5 ERIC MCPHEE: Good afternoon. No specific WUCC update.
6 We don't have a meeting scheduled yet, but we're
7 looking at some time this fall. If you have any
8 agenda items you could reach out to me, or to your
9 WUCC chair.

10 And looking at having a couple of new
11 concepts on the WUCC agenda for this one.

12 Thanks.

13 LORI MATHIEU: Thank you, Eric.

14 For private wells I don't believe we have
15 anything new. I don't see Ryan on. So we don't
16 have much to share there. And that's it.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Lori.

18 LORI MATHIEU: You're welcome.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: We'll move onto workgroup reports, and
20 we'll start with Virginia de Lima, implementation
21 workgroup update.

22 Good afternoon, Virginia.

23 VIRGINIA de LIMA: Good afternoon. I'm going to punt
24 on this, because I was not able to attend the last
25 meeting.

1 But Mike Dietz graciously stepped in to chair
2 the meeting, and I've asked him to do the update
3 today.

4 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. Hello, Michael.

5 **MICHAEL DIETZ:** How are you, Jack?

6 **THE CHAIRMAN:** How are you?

7 **MICHAEL DIETZ:** Thanks, Virginia.

8 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thanks for being with us.

9 **MICHAEL DIETZ:** My pleasure.

10 So the last meeting we talked quite a bit.
11 Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the
12 retreat either, but as a group we did talk quite a
13 bit about how it went and outcomes of that; that
14 the group read over the report that was produced.
15 And everybody very much appreciated the leadership
16 that Virginia provided on that retreat and the
17 efforts of everyone there.

18 I think a couple of takeaways were the -- for
19 our group talking about the topical sub-workgroups
20 that we do as part of the implementation
21 workgroup, and going forward, how those are
22 determined.

23 Maybe there should be a little more strategy
24 around that, and you know, we're not quite sure
25 how that will play out yet. But we just feel that

1 there needs to perhaps be a little -- we need to
2 be a little more strategic about that, especially
3 given the workload of people in the group and, you
4 know, and others that are involved.

5 And also we talked quite a bit about the need
6 for having a separate implementation workgroup in
7 addition to the advisory group. And I think
8 everyone was pretty much in agreement that it
9 would make more sense to combine the two to
10 streamline things.

11 So I don't know what needs to be done to make
12 that happen, but there was --

13 **THE CHAIRMAN:** I think we're going to talk about that
14 later on. Thank you.

15 **MICHAEL DIETZ:** Okay. Good. So I just wanted to let
16 you know that that, you know, that that was our
17 general feeling as a group.

18 As far as our subgroups for -- I know that
19 Denise will give an update on the outreach and
20 education. And the only other active subgroup
21 that we have right now is Chris Bellucci with the
22 USGS data collection. And they are almost done
23 with a report that they've been working on.

24 So I assume we'll hear about that at the next
25 meeting.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Michael.

2 MICHAEL DIETZ: I think that's it. Denise, is there
3 anything else that you feel that I may have
4 missed? But I think that was pretty much
5 everything we covered at that last meeting.

6 Or Ali?

7 DENISE SAVAGEAU: Yeah, I think you're good.

8 MICHAEL DIETZ: Thank you.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

10 Martin, interagency drought workgroup?

11 MARTIN HEFT: Sure. Thanks. So I'm happy to report
12 that as of today we have not entered any drought
13 stage for 2023, so -- which is good. So hopefully
14 that continues on.

15 We do have a meeting this Thursday, September
16 7th. We will be completing our post 2022 drought
17 action, our after action improvement plan report.
18 And we'll have that for submission as soon as that
19 gets voted on, hopefully at our meeting on
20 Thursday.

21 Also just since our last official meeting I
22 wanted to let you know that a number of the
23 members of the interagency drought workgroup had a
24 meeting presentation with Sylvia Reeves, a drought
25 information coordinator.

1 We did participate in the eastern region
2 climate services webinar and had a presentation on
3 a national integrated drought information system,
4 which was great. And we did, you know, have those
5 presentations, everything posted to the website.

6 And it was a great just, kind of,
7 acknowledgment and seeing how things work on a
8 national level, and how it's all directed with
9 Connecticut just to kind of -- a little continuing
10 education, if you will, for the drought workgroup.

11 And that's the report that I have.

12 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you.

13 Any question for Martin?

14 And many thanks to the drought workgroup
15 who's done really a great job.

16 Fortunately, we're in a good spot right now
17 when it comes to rain. I don't know -- but now
18 we're into the middle a heat wave the next few
19 days. So we'll see.

20 Anyway, outreach and education.

21 Denise, please?

22 **DENISE SAVAGEAU:** The education outreach group had a
23 meeting today. We didn't meet in August, but we
24 met today.

25 Let's see.

1 So we're looking at having a workshop this
2 fall in mid-October. And this was one we had
3 planned in the spring that didn't come off, and it
4 has to do with water supply and forest and the
5 impact of climate change on our forest, and
6 therefore, on our water supply. So we're looking
7 to get that set up.

8 And then focusing our next report, our next
9 action for next year, taking Lori's advice. We're
10 looking at a theme of source water protection with
11 a focus on the 50th anniversary of the Safe
12 Drinking Water Act, and the 20th anniversary of
13 the adoption of the aquifer protection regulations
14 in Connecticut.

15 And we will have something more detailed on
16 that for you to take a look at either at your
17 October or November meeting, depending on how our
18 meeting falls with your next meeting. And we'll
19 be bringing that to you on how we plan on moving
20 that forward.

21 We spent most of our meeting on drought
22 education and, you know, we were kind of asked to
23 look at that so that we had materials prepared in
24 advance of a drought. And of course, it's a great
25 year for us to be doing this preparation work

1 since we aren't in a drought, and it's not --
2 we're not -- all not bustling around doing that.

3 So we're in the process of drafting something
4 on private wells. Mike Dietz has given us a rough
5 draft and we have a little workgroup that's now
6 looking at getting that together. We'll be
7 reviewing it and working on it, and then submit it
8 to the implementation team, and eventually getting
9 that to the Water Planning Council.

10 I also was able to have a discussion with Jim
11 O'Donnell and Dave Murphy with CIRCA, and see what
12 they could do providing us information. And you
13 know, at first they seemed a little reluctant, but
14 I wasn't -- I'm not sure they understood what we
15 were doing.

16 And certainly, we're not looking at doing the
17 work that the WUCC is doing, or that the water
18 utilities are doing, but basically to get some
19 basic fact sheets on what drought is; maybe
20 looking at what this, you know, flash drought that
21 we're talking about now, and also looking at some
22 of the nature-based solutions for dealing with
23 drought. And so all of that science work that
24 they do as a climate change and resiliency and
25 adaptation institute for the State of Connecticut.

1 And I'll be following up on -- then we had a
2 great dialogue last Friday, and I'll be following
3 up to see what they might be able to -- what
4 they're thinking they can come up with.

5 And then just lastly on that, the outreach
6 and education is going to be doing some education
7 for ourselves. And Eric Lindquist with DPH had
8 attended a national session on flash droughts, and
9 will be presenting that at our October meeting.

10 That was scheduled to be held October 3rd,
11 but actually I have a conflict and we're looking
12 at changing that meeting date. So stay tuned and
13 we're hoping that Eric will be able to -- we have
14 him in on the Doodle poll to set up that meeting.
15 So that's pretty much what we've been working on.

16 And we're also going to be looking at finally
17 getting some policy around the branding and logo,
18 how to use it, when to use it, and we've got draft
19 documents we're going to be looking at, at our
20 next meeting. So stay tuned on that.

21 And again, our next meeting that was
22 originally scheduled for October 3rd is going to
23 be rescheduled. We have a Doodle poll and we'll
24 let you know as soon as we get that meeting
25 scheduled.

1 behave. They're doing some pretty intense
2 research on that.

3 There is a website you can go to, to learn
4 more about that, and I will put that in the chat
5 after my report is done with.

6 But I want to turn it -- Denise, do you want
7 to give the report on the source water protection?

8 The white paper?

9 DENISE SAVAGEAU: Sure. I can just do that quickly.

10 After kind of being stalled for a while, we're
11 really moving forward with a new workgroup -- or I
12 should say, a revised workgroup on source water
13 protection.

14 And so that's to develop a white paper on
15 source water protection, looking at what exists,
16 you know. So what do we already have in terms of
17 resources? And then identifying gaps and then,
18 you know, hopefully some solutions.

19 The Department of Public Health had an intern
20 that helped us a lot get a rough draft together.
21 So we're looking at that and the workgroup
22 continues on that, and our next meeting will be in
23 September. Again that, that date is also being
24 determined as we speak, and we will let you know
25 how and where that goes.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay -- but the pricing, Alecia?

2 ALICEA CHARAMUT: Oh, that's me, too.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, that's you.

4 ALICEA CHARAMUT: We did not meet last month. We just
5 had too many key people that were out because of
6 vacation. So we're going to try again this month.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: It's very difficult to meet in July and
8 August, for sure.

9 ALICEA CHARAMUT: Very much so.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

11 Is Margaret on the line?

12 MARGARET MINER: I am on the line. Can you hear me?

13 THE CHAIRMAN: There she is. Hi, Margaret.

14 MARGARET MINER: If I could just back up a little? I
15 also submitted comments on the energy procurement.
16 They're very short, however, but they are much the
17 same points.

18 Now before we get to lands group, can I make
19 some comment about private wells?

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Of course, yes.

21 MARGARET MINER: Okay. My conservation commission
22 wants to do something we did once in the past,
23 help town people do water testing of their private
24 wells, and that's one reason I think I came to you
25 asking, what are the DPH standards?

1 So they also now are thinking of maybe doing
2 something with filters. Now in an effort to find,
3 to implement this plan we've had a tour of the
4 conservation districts, the town-based health
5 districts, in some cases the watershed group,
6 because -- so I'm learning a lot.

7 One thing -- and I have a lot of questions
8 regarding private wells, and what's available, and
9 what kind of support if local people want to do
10 them?

11 My latest search is that my Executive
12 Director of the district says that they get all
13 reports, water reports from a private firm that is
14 doing the testing, and that they look through them
15 for anomalies or bads, red flags. And they will
16 give guidance to the homeowner.

17 So what I'm trying to find out -- and just to
18 give you an example of the byroads is, does that
19 mean they kind of check every odd-looking entry?
20 Is it sort of automatic? Who else does this? So
21 that's -- private wells have been taking up a lot
22 of my time in and around Roxbury.

23 Now the very exciting watershed lands group,
24 we're meeting Friday morning at nine. This
25 morning I prepared for Bruce a little e-mail note

1 to send out with the final notes that Karen did,
2 and the promising that, unless people wanted some
3 kind of -- wanted to make some special comment, an
4 agenda would follow.

5 The tasks that we will probably be addressing
6 are on page 2 -- (inaudible) -- Bruce got stuck in
7 draft -- got stuck in draft -- (inaudible.)

8 GRAHAM STEVENS: Margaret, we're having a tough time
9 hearing you. You keep going on mute.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, you're breaking up.

11 MARGARET MINER: Yeah, I don't know why the phone --
12 you can hear me now. Right?

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

14 MARGARET MINER: At any rate, I apologize to Bruce; the
15 e-mail went out late, but it should be an exciting
16 meeting. If people have questions, please call.

17 The obvious big question is we only have one
18 co-chair now. And so I had spoken with Karen, and
19 I think Alecia, about a candidate whom I somewhat
20 tardily wrote. I have a couple of candidates in
21 mind. I haven't had a response. So we'll see.

22 The general way, for years it was a water
23 planning -- a water group, a water utility, and an
24 environmental group of some sort as co-chairs.
25 When Karen and I were co-chairs it maybe was a

1 terribly unfair playing field -- except that Karen
2 levels everything.

3 But I think -- the one thing I'm thinking
4 about, a co-chair, and it's a balance of sort of
5 perspectives, and of course a brilliant person.

6 So I don't know if I should say anymore now.
7 I'm hoping to follow up with a candidate and with
8 Alecia, and with Dan. And I think that's all I
9 have to do about a co-chair.

10 Is that right?

11 I mean, then the group -- the group may have
12 something to say, but I don't think we need a
13 separate vote or a Water Planning Council action,
14 but I could be wrong.

15 Martin will tell me.

16 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Martin, tell us. Do we?

17 **MARGARET MINER:** Today it's Lori.

18 **ALICEA CHARAMUT:** So actually that reminded me.

19 There was something I forgot to include in my
20 report, if you don't mind? Since we're sort of
21 still in the advisory group here -- was that the
22 nominating committee will be bringing a slate of
23 candidates to you all in October.

24 So we should have a slate for the advisory
25 group in September, and then that slate will come

1 to you guys in October.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Sounds good. Is that okay, Martin?

3 MARTIN HEFT: Yeah, that's fine. I'm not sure what

4 Margaret's question was, though. I apologize.

5 MARGARET MINER: My question was that I think --

6 (inaudible) -- when we select the co-chairman,

7 which I assumed we would do, we know, you know,

8 people the group likes. It should be a balance of

9 perspectives. I have invited one person that had

10 been invited and haven't heard back.

11 So my question, Martin, is can we pursue this

12 and settle on a current co-chair using the --

13 through Alicia and Dan and the group? Or does it

14 require some kind of Water Planning Council action

15 for us to name the co-chair?

16 MARTIN HEFT: I don't believe so from the guidelines,

17 at least, from my memory of what was done from the

18 advisory group that that gave them power to set up

19 the subgroups.

20 MARGARET MINER: Good. Okay. If that's good, so I'll

21 be back to Alicia and Dan. And I hope we'll

22 have our co-chair -- (unintelligible) -- our we'll

23 draft someone. Okay.

24 Thank you, everyone. Thank you. People.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Margaret.

1 Any questions for Margaret?

2 MICHAEL DIETZ: Lori, Jack, this is Mike. Lori, I
3 don't know if you want to mention anything about
4 the private well stuff?

5 Obviously, DPH has a great program on private
6 wells, educational materials and resources, but
7 they don't have the money resources or the
8 laboratory resources to run people's samples at
9 home for free. So two years ago I wrote a
10 proposal to get some funding to do this to fill
11 that gap.

12 So Margaret, I'd be happy to talk with you a
13 little more. I'm currently in the midst of a
14 program where we're doing reduced cost sampling
15 for people in the state.

16 MARGARET MINER: Really?

17 MICHAEL DIETZ: And I'm doing educational programs as
18 part of that. So I'd be happy to chat with you
19 afterwards about that.

20 MARGARET MINER: Thanks. I appreciate that.

21 Just FYI, the answer I got was that DPH is
22 reluctant to give direct help to a local water
23 testing group because of the ambiguity about the
24 standard, and questions of them, what do you do
25 about it?

1 So that's one thing I'm following up, and
2 when we speak I'll bring that question also to
3 you.

4 MICHAEL DIETZ: Sounds good.

5 Is it best to call you? Or can I --

6 MARGARET MINER: Yeah, just call me. Just call me. I
7 think phone number is on all my e-mails.

8 MICHAEL DIETZ: Okay.

9 MARGARET MINER: Or just e-mail. Okay. Thanks.

10 MICHAEL DIETZ: Very good.

11 LORI MATHIEU: So Mike?

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Lori.

13 LORI MATHIEU: Thanks for bringing that up.

14 Yeah. Margaret, if you'd like to reach out
15 to me to talk further about private wells and what
16 we can do, I would love to have a discussion with
17 you about that.

18 You know we are direct support for many
19 people across the state who call our program.
20 Right now we have one person in that program. We
21 also are a direct report -- a direct technical
22 adviser to our 60 local health departments.

23 So there's a lot of work there and working to
24 rebuild our, you know, the program that Ryan
25 Tetreault oversees right now. So I would love to

1 chat with you further about that.

2 And Mike, you have a great writeup. Maybe I
3 just read that in your newsletter about what you
4 are doing with your private well testing. And
5 maybe you could share that here on the chat. That
6 would be wonderful for people to see what you're
7 working on for private wells.

8 MICHAEL DIETZ: No problem, Lori.

9 I'll drop it into the chat.

10 LORI MATHIEU: Thank you.

11 MARGARET MINER: I did want to mention, Lori, that I
12 looked at the a Darien Health District which has
13 an active program and a new video. And they talk
14 about, you know, water testing, drinking water,
15 the food service places, you know, the restaurant
16 or caterer.

17 And one thing that they do in Darien is they
18 apparently test the water for surface -- from a
19 public health standpoint. They test the water in,
20 like, swimming pools. And I can think of a few
21 horrible little ponds in Roxbury where people
22 swim.

23 So I don't know -- well, I'm investigating
24 and thinking about health, and it occurs to me
25 that pathogens in the swimming water, or

1 cyanobacteria, or maybe even just testing a public
2 pool also are part of -- I'm also wondering if
3 that's part of what the health districts do?

4 But I look forward to learning, to learning
5 more from both of you. Thanks for the invitation.

6 LORI MATHIEU: Thank you, Margaret.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Very good.

8 Virginia, you have a question?

9 Or -- I see your hand is up.

10 VIRGINIA de LIMA: Yes, I have a comment. What I hear
11 here is that we somehow need to pay more attention
12 to how these opportunities are communicated to the
13 public, because Mike's program is offering
14 something and others didn't know about it.

15 A bunch of years ago the USGS, working with
16 DPH, did some testing of samples from private
17 wells, particularly for arsenic and uranium. A
18 lot of people missed that. How the notification
19 of that happened, I don't know.

20 And so I think in each of these programs
21 there needs to be a focus on how the opportunity
22 is communicated and make sure that the actual
23 homeowners get the information.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm going to Denise, Chair of our
25 education and outreach. Is that something we can

1 incorporate into that?

2 DENISE SAVAGEAU: Yeah, we can take a look at it. One
3 of the things our group is looking at is how we
4 use social media as well as the website.

5 So we can put that on our agenda.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

7 And then all of our respective agencies
8 have -- I know we have our own social media,
9 YouTube, and everything else at PURA to keep
10 people aware what's going on. So maybe we can
11 coordinate with all those vehicles to make sure.

12 VIRGINIA de LIMA: In all due respect, your typical
13 homeowner isn't going onto the agency's social
14 media sites.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

16 GRAHAM STEVENS: I'm shocked. That's terrible.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: It's like most homeowners don't look at
18 their utility bill.

19 GRAHAM STEVENS: Many homeowners may not even know
20 where their water comes from. I don't think we've
21 addressed that problem.

22 But you know, I think, Virginia, there are a
23 growing number of people who are interested in
24 social media from government, and it's a good way
25 to consume it sometimes.

1 But I think we need to think about -- and
2 something we've been thinking about at DEEP is,
3 how do we communicate on water topics? Right? We
4 have, you know, fisheries folks. We have, you
5 know, we reiterate drought information.

6 We talk about, you know, strategic periods of
7 time and incidents and events, but I think, you
8 know, and this is something that I know Denise is
9 thinking about in her group, too, is -- you know,
10 how do we come up with, like, a true strategic
11 communications plan, you know, both using socials
12 as well as other forms of communication?

13 And to everyone's point here in this
14 conversation, how do you keep people cross, you
15 know, cross-pollinated? Because that's the real
16 way that you get information out there.

17 I think I need to get on Mike Dietz's e-mail
18 list, though. It sounds like it's got some good
19 information. These are the kind of things; that
20 you need to be an active consumer, you need to be
21 curious, and you need to have the right
22 connections to good sources of information.

23 So I think that's something we can all work
24 on and can apply for.

25 VIRGINIA de LIMA: And we can't forget the challenge of

1 private wells in that it's, we cannot -- well,
2 Lori, correct me if I'm wrong, but we cannot
3 release the location of problems that are
4 identified.

5 And so that's an issue.

6 LORI MATHIEU: True. True.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, it's something that we'll
8 keep front and center. I mean, education,
9 communication, all of our agencies, it's something
10 that it's an ongoing challenge. I mean, it's very
11 difficult.

12 I mean, you're right, Virginia. Not
13 everybody goes onto YouTube, and not everybody
14 goes onto the PURA website unless it's something
15 that's impacting them directly. One that
16 everybody gets, in this day and age everybody
17 still gets a tax bill. No matter where you are in
18 the 169 towns, everybody in the state of
19 Connecticut gets a tax bill.

20 And if you look, you open up -- and usually
21 what they do is they tell you how much money the
22 Town is getting from the State for education and
23 for other things. So that might be an area we hit
24 when it comes to wells. I don't know. So just
25 food for thought.

1 All right. Anything else under workgroup
2 reports?

3
4 (No response.)

5
6 THE CHAIRMAN: If not, we're onto other business. And
7 we have sent out some information on the
8 Connecticut hazard mitigation strategy workshop.
9 And this is for all members to discuss.

10 And Martin, some people from your shop went,
11 I know. Right?

12 MARTIN HEFT: I believe I have one member that actually
13 kind of sat in and listened through some of it.

14 And then we also had our climate and
15 infrastructure policy development coordinator,
16 Joanna Wozniak-Brown that actually attended. She
17 works directly for the Secretary.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

19 LORI MATHIEU: And we had, I believe, Eric Lindquist,
20 who's with DPH. Eric is on this meeting, but I
21 believe, Eric, you had attended that meeting?

22 ERIC LINDQUIST: Yes, that's right.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: And how was it, Eric?

24 Because they're actually looking for
25 something from us. Are they not, Mr. Graham?

1 Mr. Stevens?

2 GRAHAM STEVENS: Are they?

3 THE CHAIRMAN: I thought --

4 LORI MATHIEU: They are. There's a spreadsheet --
5 maybe Eric Lindquist could help us out here.

6 There was a spreadsheet with some items that were
7 noted for the Water Planning Council.

8 And I think, Jack, we received an e-mail from
9 the consultant that's working with Emergency
10 Management for us to take a look at.

11 I think that's where all of this started.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Correct.

13 GRAHAM STEVENS: Oh, right. Right, right, right.

14 LORI MATHIEU: It goes back a couple of months now.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: And I told them, yeah. It's their
16 consultants making a lot of money working for the
17 State, I imagine, and they want something from us.
18 And I told them I'd bring it up at the next Water
19 Planning Council meeting.

20 And she said we can have, I think -- is that
21 Jade Payne? I think it's Jade Payne --

22 LORI MATHIEU: Yeah.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: -- that's looking for this information.

24 LORI MATHIEU: Eric, maybe if you could expand on the
25 details a bit? Eric Lindquist?

1 ERIC LINDQUIST: Yeah, absolutely.

2 So you're right, Jack. DEMHS contracts out
3 for this planning effort, the Natural Hazard
4 Mitigation Plan through Dewberry. And Dewberry
5 Engineers has been handling the planning process
6 and the coordination among the agencies.

7 And this plan is updated annually every five
8 years. It's DEMHS, our emergency management
9 agency, working in collaboration with DEEP and
10 also with various other stakeholders, including,
11 you know, everything from local government on up
12 through other state agencies.

13 And there's a particular -- that the plan is
14 extensive, and it talks about obviously mitigation
15 actions for natural hazards, but also planning
16 actions and preparation actions.

17 And in the mitigation strategy there are a
18 number of activities. I believe there are 60,
19 60-something, 62 or 63 activities that have lead
20 agencies assigned to them along with supporting
21 agencies. And these are things that are typically
22 pretty broad planning mitigation tools, developing
23 data, developing -- let's see.

24 Some examples, I'm pulling them up here
25 talking about resilience planning, emergency

1 response, controlling drinking water access, how
2 to respond to contamination events, and so
3 forth -- just giving a few examples.

4 And in this case in the prior plan the Water
5 Planning Council had actually been designated as
6 leads, as a lead agency even though the WPC isn't
7 technically an agency. I'm not sure how that
8 occurred and we've been working with our team here
9 at DPH to figure out how that came to be. And
10 it's unclear, and hopefully DEMHS will be able to
11 shed some light on that in the coming days when we
12 speak to them.

13 But if you want to go through, I'm happy to
14 go through them, you know, if there's time, the
15 mitigation actions that were assigned to the Water
16 Planning Council.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I mean, I think we should, because
18 we should so we know who's going to do what -- so
19 we can respond, respond to Jade.

20 LORI MATHIEU: And Eric, there's not many of them.

21 Right?

22 THE CHAIRMAN: No.

23 LORI MATHIEU: There's not many?

24 MARTIN HEFT: Yeah, there's three.

25 LORI MATHIEU: There's three?

1 ERIC MCPHEE: Yeah.

2 MARTIN HEFT: Do you have it, Eric? If not, I have it
3 all. I can share a screen.

4 ERIC LINDQUIST: Yeah, I think the link -- you can do
5 that, Martin. Or it's an online shared
6 spreadsheet that I think is open to everybody.

7 So you could either drop a link in for people
8 to open and hopefully, I don't think -- I think
9 you're able to edit it. So hopefully, folks,
10 please don't edit it if we go that route -- but
11 either way.

12 MARTIN HEFT: Actually, I don't think I can share.

13 LORI MATHIEU: Yeah. Eric, do you want to share it on
14 your screen?

15 ERIC LINDQUIST: Yeah.

16 LORI MATHIEU: And Jack, does that make sense? And
17 just take a look at the three items?

18 We've talked about internally within DPH.
19 Part of it is -- and Jack, you and I chatted
20 briefly when we first saw the e-mail. We don't
21 know if these items assigned to -- as Eric
22 mentioned, are really appropriate for the Water
23 Planning Council to take on, or not.

24 So that's what we should definitely discuss.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's do it.

1 ERIC LINDQUIST: Did it come up? Is it being clear?

2 LORI MATHIEU: Yes.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: It's up.

4 LORI MATHIEU: Yeah, it's there.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Nice work, Eric.

6 Looks good.

7 ERIC LINDQUIST: Okay. Well, a disclaimer. This isn't
8 DPH's spreadsheet. This is Dewberry's spreadsheet
9 that they have prepared on behalf of DEMHS.

10 So here are the activity descriptions, and I
11 know this could be tough to see. If I need to
12 zoom in more -- I zoomed in a little bit. I might
13 be able to zoom in more, if you can't see?

14 GRAHAM STEVENS: Looks all right to me.

15 ERIC LINDQUIST: Okay. So this activity number four is
16 the first one that's assigned to the Water
17 Planning Council, which is -- and I don't know if
18 you want me to read it out. I think folks can
19 read it themselves, and we can discuss it.

20 Or -- I'm sorry. Yeah, it is designated as
21 the Water Planning Council, yes. I think it had
22 been assigned to DPH, and then somebody moved it
23 over to the Water Planning Council.

24 MARTIN HEFT: Yeah. So my recommendation on this one
25 would be that it would be the Water Planning

1 Council as well as the interagency drought
2 workgroup, because we actually in the drought plan
3 actually have model water use restriction
4 ordinances in there and everything.

5 So I -- obviously, we don't want to put it
6 right down as the interagency group, but the Water
7 Planning Council and, you know, the interagency
8 drought workgroup would be the two, I think, which
9 would be appropriate for, you know, highlighting
10 this on at least from the water, you know, from
11 our side as a water planning council.

12 LORI MATHIEU: Martin, to that point in the drought
13 plan, isn't this already noted in the drought
14 plan? It's been in the drought plan, I believe,
15 for a long time.

16 I would say the challenge with this is that
17 this has been out there for 20 years or so.

18 MARTIN HEFT: Correct, yeah.

19 LORI MATHIEU: I think this has been since the start of
20 the Council. We've tried --

21 MARTIN HEFT: Since 2003, exactly 20 years, Lori.

22 LORI MATHIEU: Twenty years we've really tried to work
23 on this, and it's been quite the challenge. And I
24 just think we need a different strategy, a new way
25 of thinking about it.

1 And I would agree with Martin, that under the
2 drought group, under us as the, you know, the
3 people that they would report to -- but we should
4 all, to me this is all hands on deck, because this
5 is important to do, but it's been very challenging
6 as well.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: We do not have any -- or does anybody
8 know of any local ordinances that we have in terms
9 of conservation? I know of --

10 LORI MATHIEU: Yes, yes.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Where? Where is this?

12 LORI MATHIEU: There's two that I'm aware of, and
13 probably --

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Southbury?

15 LORI MATHIEU: There's one in Simsbury and there's one
16 in Norwalk. And I'm sure there's others, but the
17 reason why they adopted these things are, just
18 historically, that they as a town or city wanted
19 to adopt them, not because we had --

20 THE CHAIRMAN: No, no. I know it's been an ongoing
21 challenge for us, and I remember Southbury tried
22 to do it years ago and it fell through, so.

23 LORI MATHIEU: They did. Yeah, they tried -- with Len
24 DeJong.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: I've got three hands raised. Is this

1 relative to our conversation, with Virginia and
2 Denise and Becca? So Virginia, go ahead.

3 VIRGINIA de LIMA: As you mentioned, we've been talking
4 about this for years. And one of the reasons that
5 it's been so difficult is that each community has
6 got very unique circumstances.

7 And what we talked about in -- I don't know
8 if it was the last generation of the drought plan
9 or a couple generations ago, was creating a menu
10 of how to handle different situations, whether it
11 be domestic wells or municipal reservoirs, or what
12 may it be so that a community could pick and
13 choose the paragraphs that fit their unique
14 situation. Because asking them to do it from
15 scratch is pretty overwhelming, and the examples
16 that we have don't fit each community.

17 And so I would propose that we put together a
18 team of people, perhaps agency people who would
19 draft those, that menu. So you take one from
20 column A and two from column B to make it fit your
21 town.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

23 Becca?

24 BECCA DAHL: Yes. I thank you for the opportunity to
25 chime in. As many of you know, I'm right now the

1 state drought coordinator working with Martin on
2 the administration of the drought plan and the
3 interagency drought workgroup.

4 One of the items that we've been talking a
5 lot about as a staff with a sort of staff
6 workgroup, so to speak, that has been working on
7 the recommendations is also developing -- is also
8 working on developing a tabletop exercise to test
9 the drought plan.

10 And so Lori, to your point I just wanted to
11 bring that up, because one of the things that we
12 have discussed and we've had a couple
13 conversations now with DEMHS and with northeast
14 (unintelligible) the NOAA umbrella, for those who
15 don't know.

16 But one of the items that we've discussed is
17 talking about how do you move through drought
18 stages we haven't previously gone into? And also
19 how to better coordinate with local municipalities
20 especially in those cases where we get really
21 localized drought.

22 So I did want to name that. That's something
23 that we're actively trying to pull together as
24 well, and just put that out there in terms of how
25 that relates to this plan. Thank you.

1 LORI MATHIEU: And Becca -- Jack, if I could?

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Sure.

3 LORI MATHIEU: Just to follow up on that, that's an
4 excellent idea to do a tabletop to see how it
5 works in an exercise is important. And I think
6 that Norwalk is a really great example of a city
7 that has decided to be proactive.

8 And they've been -- Martin, you and I know
9 they've always been sort of ahead of the State in
10 announcing their drought initiatives locally,
11 which is their right to do. And I think maybe
12 Norwalk's example is a good one for us to take a
13 careful look at, Becca, you know, and Simsbury.

14 I remember the gentleman in Simsbury, he may
15 have even presented to us a couple years ago
16 before COVID, possibly. I can't quite remember,
17 but they took it on their own to, on their own
18 initiative to adopt a drought ordinance as well.

19 BECCA DAHL: Yeah, I am familiar with those. I
20 appreciate you reminding me, Lori, because that
21 was one of the items that we were tasked with
22 doing, was starting to pull those together based
23 on the recommendations of the drought workgroup.

24 So yeah, definitely I'll take another look
25 and maybe that's something for the staff group

1 that has kind of decided to continue meeting on
2 recommendations for updating the drought plan, to
3 take on. So thanks again.

4 LORI MATHIEU: Thank you.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Becca.

6 Denise, and then Virginia.

7 DENISE SAVAGEAU: So I just wanted to emphasize that
8 hazard mitigation plan is a mitigation plan, not
9 just an emergency response plan. So that we
10 really need to look at it in terms of what actions
11 need to be taken to mitigate drought.

12 So again, looking at those nature-based
13 solutions, not just responding to the drought once
14 we're here.

15 Similarly, you know we're the Water Planning
16 Council. So it's not just about drought. It's
17 also about, you know, the impact of, whether it be
18 climate change or flooding or other, any other
19 emergency on water resources. So is there a role?

20 Obviously, there's a lot of work that is
21 already being done for flooding, but what again
22 would be the role of the Water Planning Council?
23 Again, I would suggest that some of those things,
24 looking at the mitigation, and encouraging
25 nature-based solutions to some of those

1 challenges.

2 We have all the non-point source pollution
3 stuff in there, you know, in our work, in our, you
4 know, in our work plan and the stuff we need to be
5 talking about. And all of it is exacerbated when
6 we have natural hazards.

7 There's some other natural hazards that are
8 going to be impacting, you know, what we're doing.
9 When I'm talking about forest and the invasive
10 species and the pest outbreaks we're having, like
11 with spongy moth in the northwest -- excuse me,
12 yeah, in Northwestern Connecticut -- or I should
13 say, Northeastern Connecticut, where we had a lot
14 of damage to the forest.

15 What's the impact of that natural hazard on
16 public drinking water supplies if all of the
17 sudden we lose all of our forests to pests, you
18 know, to a natural pest? Then it gets exacerbated
19 by drought, and now we don't have a forest.

20 So I think we really need to look at it
21 holistically and look at that, those mitigation
22 factors for all those types of things that are
23 impacting water resources. Thank you.

24 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Virginia.

25 **VIRGINIA de LIMA:** Becca, I just want to make sure that

1 you're aware of the tabletop exercise on the
2 drought that was done probably 15 years ago hosted
3 by the Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition. It
4 might be a good jumping off place for you in
5 designing a new one.

6 That was run by a consultant. So I don't
7 know how much of the information is available to
8 steal, but I just want to make sure you're aware
9 of it.

10 **BECCA DAHL:** Yeah, I've had that shared with me
11 internally, so. But I appreciate it.

12 Thanks, Virginia.

13 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Okay. So we need to respond. We've had
14 a lot of input back into how we respond. But the
15 question is, how are we going to respond to the
16 questions from these consultants?

17 **LORI MATHIEU:** So I guess on this one do we need to, in
18 column d, do we need to make any changes to the
19 status update? Because there's a note in here
20 from -- apparently, from someone from DPH about
21 who should be the lead agency.

22 Should any of that paragraph be modified in
23 some way? I guess that's the question.

24 **THE CHAIRMAN:** That's pretty much -- it's kind of
25 regurgitating what we just talked about.

1 LORI MATHIEU: Right?

2 MARTIN HEFT: Right.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: So --

4 MARTIN HEFT: And the only other thing I'd add -- and I
5 don't know if it's for this or not, you know. And
6 I know as we know, you know, obviously we're
7 trying to encourage towns or municipalities to do
8 these, you know, local ordinances. There's no,
9 you know, statutory provision that they must or
10 anything else. So it's always a very difficult
11 thing to get a town to come on and do some of
12 these types of things.

13 So unless there's going to be, you know, some
14 legislative change that makes it mandatory that
15 they do this, you know, on it, it can only be a
16 recommendation as we know, you know, for that.

17 So no matter how much we do, you know, as a
18 council or as other groups and everything else,
19 making it as easy as possible, you know, towns
20 don't also like to be told what to do, you know,
21 on it.

22 So you've got that balancing act that we have
23 to do, not necessarily that has to be part of our
24 response, but just something to keep in mind as we
25 also look at some of these other ones that are on

1 here, you know, on it as we're talking about, you
2 know, coordinating with water utilities and
3 everything else to promote water conservation
4 measures.

5 We're in the same thing. Unless they're
6 statutory language that's going to require them to
7 do it, you know, it's an option.

8 LORI MATHIEU: So to your point, Martin, I like the
9 idea of a menu. I think Virginia brought that up,
10 and maybe we could put that notion in -- I don't
11 know if it belongs in the status update, but the
12 idea of, I'd like to capture that.

13 Because to your point, if there's no
14 requirement then municipalities would say, why do
15 I need to do this?

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Exactly.

17 LORI MATHIEU: I think the example of Norwalk is a good
18 one, because they are taking action. They have
19 two big utilities, two big public water systems
20 that serve their population, and those two large
21 public water systems listen to the City.

22 And when the City issues their first round of
23 new announcements the City is taking action, and I
24 think others other towns may be learning from
25 Norwalk and knowing why they do what they do, I

1 guess, trying to explain why, what the importance
2 of this is to other municipalities through the
3 lens of maybe Norwalk and Simsbury.

4 So you know, at the note it says, pathway
5 forward given the delays and need to reevaluate.
6 Maybe we put another sentence in there that we've
7 discussed that and that we are setting up a group
8 to come up with --

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

10 LORI MATHIEU: -- new ways to move forward.

11 GRAHAM STEVENS: Folks -- I'm sorry to jump right in
12 there, Lori. I have to jump off right now. My
13 sincere apologies.

14 Jack, I'm going to reach out to you with my
15 thoughts.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

17 GRAHAM STEVENS: Because I think that we, maybe what
18 each agency can do is just, you know, call Jack
19 and spend five minutes going through each agency's
20 perspective on updates just so that if there's any
21 conflicts, you know as Chair maybe he can help
22 resolve those.

23 But just so that we can all get our input
24 here, considering you know we're talking about the
25 Council being the lead -- but unfortunately, I

1 just can't do that right now at this meeting.

2 **THE CHAIRMAN:** I understood that. Is that okay with
3 Martin and Lori? We'll do that, do it that way?

4 I think we have a good beginning right here
5 now. So I think we just have to make some
6 adjustments to that moving forward.

7 **LORI MATHIEU:** Okay.

8 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Is that okay, Lori?

9 **LORI MATHIEU:** Yeah, that works. Yeah.

10 **THE CHAIRMAN:** All right. Graham, take care.

11 Thank you. No worries.

12 **GRAHAM STEVENS:** Bye.

13 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Okay. Thank you, Eric. Eric, and we'll
14 probably loop you in since you were part of the --
15 you went to it.

16 So as we finalize some things it's okay if
17 Lori will incorporate your input as well?

18 **ERIC LINDQUIST:** That that sounds good, Jack. I'm
19 happy to help, and I'm happy to help give a little
20 more overview, too, of the process for those who
21 might appreciate that.

22 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Okay. Good. Thank you very much.

23 **LORI MATHIEU:** Thank you, Eric.

24 **ERIC LINDQUIST:** Thanks.

25 **THE CHAIRMAN:** So it's that time of year again, the

1 annual report to the Legislature. Virginia, do
2 they have it done for us already?

3 LORI MATHIEU: So Jack, one of the things that
4 internally here at DPH, we would -- internal
5 leadership would like to have a draft of any
6 legislative report that is due, you know, ahead of
7 schedule so that our leadership can, you know,
8 have it and take a look at it.

9 So one of the items that -- the reason why we
10 put this on here now is that we could get started.
11 And so the internal due date to my leadership for
12 this report is mid-November. So we have a little
13 over two months.

14 And the two staff that are on here, Eric
15 Lindquist and Eric McPhee can assist if needed to
16 pull the report together to help.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Lori.

18 And Virginia, you're -- all kidding aside,
19 you did an excellent job last year.

20 VIRGINIA de LIMA: So last year a topical sub workgroup
21 of the implementation workgroup took on the
22 responsibility of developing that state water
23 plan.

24 And we did two things at that time. We
25 pulled together -- actually it was a five-year

1 review of everything that had been happening since
2 the beginning of the water plan, but also we tried
3 to set a process and come up with a template that
4 could be used.

5 And Lori, I'd like to ask your permission to
6 loop Dan in on that for a short period of time,
7 because he was really the lead and had a lot of
8 good thoughts. And I don't recall the details of
9 what about the template worked and what didn't
10 work, and I think he would do that so that we
11 would know whether we needed to do any tweaking to
12 it.

13 This year, this year should be a whole lot
14 easier because it's only one year. It's not five
15 years, and we've only had a handful of new
16 committees, but assuming that the tweaks to the
17 template are minor we can certainly send that out
18 to the chairs of the various workgroups, both
19 under implementation and under the advisory group,
20 and get them started on that process.

21 But Dan Aubin's input would be extremely
22 valuable.

23 LORI MATHIEU: Well Dan, Dan has other assignments.

24 VIRGINIA de LIMA: I'm aware of this.

25 LORI MATHIEU: So if you could share that with me and I

1 could see what I could do to work with him and
2 work that also, but I want to get Eric up to speed
3 on the process that you started.

4 I remember one comment that was made about
5 the report, and I think this was at the retreat.
6 It was when we looked at the actual report and we
7 talked about funding support. Does the report
8 actually help us in our mission in seeking funding
9 and support to be able to say, what is critical?
10 What are we working on? Why does it need to be
11 funded?

12 So you know, that sticks in my mind and it
13 may have been said during the retreat that we need
14 to sort of step back and rethink how the report is
15 formatted so that we can make it meaningful for
16 people who are looking at supporting us
17 financially, potentially supporting us
18 financially.

19 **MARTIN HEFT:** So I would agree with you, Lori, on that.
20 That was probably some of my comments from that,
21 too, as we develop a budget everything else is,
22 you know, making sure that we reference that there
23 is supposed to be updates, periodic updates to the
24 plan, everything else -- which hasn't been done
25 since the implementation -- you know, making sure

1 that some of that proper language is in there, you
2 know, as well.

3 And I think it's mentioned, you know, in the
4 last, you know, annual report. And I think
5 Virginia, to your note, definitely, yeah. We're
6 only doing a one-year update here. So we're not
7 having to do a full, you know, five-year update to
8 kind of catch us up. It's really just a summary
9 of, what did we do this past year that updates
10 from this one?

11 So it should be a relatively, you know, we
12 don't have to do the full gamut of everything.
13 It's just more of, you know -- who knows? It
14 could be a two-page summary, you know. And just
15 like, this is what's happened, you know, in this
16 past year as an annual report.

17 It doesn't have to be all inclusive because
18 we just did this full report. It's really like an
19 addendum of what things have happened over this
20 year. So I think we can, you know, streamline the
21 process a bit.

22 It is helpful getting, you know, like the
23 drought stuff. It's like, okay. We didn't wind
24 up going into a drought this year. So we, you
25 know, have less to report, you know, on that whole

1 thing, but some of the other workgroups may have
2 some other stuff that, you know, that we want to
3 highlight in there and kind of just doing it more,
4 you know, in that sense as kind of a summary type
5 document.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: I think that's a excellent point.

7 So we'll have to -- I don't want to wait
8 until October 3rd. We're going to have to talk
9 offline to keep this thing, keep this moving.

10 Okay. All right. Before we move on to
11 review of the water planning retreat, I'd like to
12 jump down to the Water Planning Council advisory
13 group and implementation workgroup, and bring this
14 out.

15 I wish that Graham was still on -- but we
16 could have gone and discussed this back at the --
17 there's some duplication, if you will, between the
18 Water Planning Council advisory group and the
19 implementation workgroup, and that by statute we
20 have set up the Water Planning Council advisory
21 group.

22 It's clear by the Legislature who's supposed
23 to be on the Council, on the advisory group, and
24 what its role is relative to the Water Planning
25 Council. The implementation group was set up for

1 the initial -- we set up as part of the initial
2 plan. And the question is, do we need to have
3 both? And I'm thinking that the implementation
4 group did a lot of work, and kudos to the group,
5 what they did, Virginia and others.

6 But I have to say that I think that it's
7 just, in terms of trying to get people to
8 volunteer, and with their other jobs and
9 everything else it's asking an awful lot to do
10 both. And I think that we can certainly have a
11 role for people that have been on the
12 implementation group moving forward.

13 For example, you know we might want you to be
14 on the annual report -- as something that would
15 fall under the Water Planning Council advisory
16 group before it came to us.

17 So I'm interested in, Martin, your thoughts,
18 Lori's thoughts. I mean frankly, to be very
19 direct, all we have to do is say, I make a motion
20 to disband it. You don't have to go to the
21 legislature.

22 This is something that's been set up by the
23 Council and -- actually, before we hear from
24 Martin and Lori, I want to hear from Virginia.

25 Virginia, what do you think of all this?

1 You've been at the helm since day one.

2 VIRGINIA de LIMA: I -- well, let me just say
3 personally I would not be offended if the
4 implementation workgroup were to disappear. And I
5 have not attended the advisory group meetings
6 recently, and so I'm not the best person to say
7 this.

8 But if we do -- I would see more of a
9 combining rather than an elimination, and a strong
10 encouragement for people who've been active in the
11 implementation workgroup to become active in the
12 advisory group, not that they necessarily need to
13 be on it, but that they participate in meetings
14 and that the tone of the meetings be open for
15 anybody to contribute whether they were a member
16 or not.

17 I think that the topical sub workgroup format
18 that the implementation workgroup has been using
19 is very good, and it has encouraged all sorts of
20 other participants because the chairs of those sub
21 workgroups have reached out to people in the well
22 drilling industry, people in the real estate
23 industry, non-typical players who have relevant
24 information and input to the topics being
25 discussed. And I would encourage that that would

1 continue.

2 One of the things that I noted, Martin, was a
3 comment that you made, whether it was at the
4 retreat or perhaps in our meeting here, is that
5 the statute for the advisory group says that it
6 may include. I for years have assumed that that
7 was a this-is-what-it's-got-to-be, and that that's
8 not the case. And so we do have a little bit more
9 flexibility.

10 The bottom line I think is that we have a
11 wide representation of stakeholders in whatever
12 group comes out of this process.

13 So those are general thoughts, and it's
14 something -- Alicea, I see that you've turned your
15 camera on -- it's something. The conversation
16 might start with Alicea and Dan and me, and maybe
17 we can make some specific recommendations back to
18 you folks for your next meeting.

19 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much, Virginia.

20 And you know what? It's interesting. I'm
21 looking -- we have 30. We do get a great deal of
22 participation.

23 And I say this over and over again, thank you
24 to everyone that works on the Water Planning
25 Council advisory group, the chairs, and the

1 implementation group and all the other
2 stakeholders that do yeoman's work as far as I'm
3 concerned.

4 The question is, like everything else in the
5 world, we want to streamline things moving forward
6 if we possibly can. So Alicea, I'd be curious to
7 hear from you.

8 ALICEA CHARAMUT: I agree with Virginia and I think
9 that, you know, we also have an opportunity to
10 have -- and Virginia probably (inaudible) --

11 VIRGINIA de LIMA: You muted yourself again, Alecia.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Alecia, you're on mute.

13 ALICEA CHARAMUT: Sorry. I guess I was off mute and I
14 put myself on mute. I was saying that, you know,
15 I think we -- I don't think it's in statute how we
16 have to be structured. It's more of our
17 operational roles which we can revisit, but you
18 know we can always have a tri-chair type of
19 situation -- which Virginia is probably going to
20 say, oh, no. Let's not do that.

21 But you know, I think myself, Dan, and
22 Virginia having a conversation would definitely be
23 helpful as to how we can combine the efforts and
24 streamline everything.

25 And you know, our water planning advisory

1 group meetings have only been an hour long. And
2 you know, so we have the time to, you know. And
3 I'm sure everybody else is probably rolling their
4 eyes, saying, no, I like the hourlong meetings,
5 but there would also be one less meeting for a lot
6 of folks to go to.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Exactly. That's right.

8 VIRGINIA de LIMA: And the implementation work has been
9 an hour and a half. So it's still less than these
10 Water Planning Council meetings.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So what I'm hearing is that you
12 might want to go -- and I'm going to hear from
13 Martin and Lori to see and get their thoughts --
14 but that you would go between now and next meeting
15 and come back hopefully with some recommendations?

16 Alicea, is that what you're suggesting?

17 And Virginia?

18 ALICEA CHARAMUT: Yeah.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Good. All right.

20 Lori then Martin, please?

21 LORI MATHIEU: I think one of the efforts in the
22 implementation group was that we wanted to have a
23 member from each agency to be part of that group.

24 I guess that one of the questions to answer
25 and to look at would be, how do the state agencies

1 stay part of that group? Does it still make sense
2 to have the agencies part of that group? Should
3 that change in some way?

4 It's just something that needs to be
5 considered, I think.

6 VIRGINIA de LIMA: Lori, if I may make a comment on
7 that? I agree with you that I think that I've
8 always pointed that out as the difference, and the
9 participation of the agencies is incredibly
10 valuable. And I would, assuming that we do
11 combine these in some way, I would encourage the
12 agencies to have a representative at the meetings.

13 Bruce Wittchen is there all the time because
14 he's designated as the support for the advisory
15 group, but if that could be an expectation just as
16 it is currently with the implementation workgroup.

17 My concern -- and I asked this question
18 explicitly at the retreat. I asked the question
19 of the agency people who were there, do you feel
20 any differently in how much you participate in the
21 meeting being a member of the implementation
22 workgroup? And not a member, just a public, if
23 you will, in the advisory group?

24 And they said, no, they did not see a
25 difference in how they were contributing to those

1 meetings. And so if the expectations from the
2 agencies were that you will go and you will
3 participate, I think it could work just fine.

4 ALICEA CHARAMUT: I think it could work better,
5 actually, if we could have consistent
6 representation at the advisory group. And all of
7 our sub -- all of our working groups within the
8 advisory group have very engaged representation
9 from the agencies, so.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Martin?

11 MARTIN HEFT: Sure. So thanks, all, for all of that
12 input. And you know, I agree that having, I
13 think, the one advisory group is the best way to
14 go about doing this.

15 My recommendation for a consolidation plan,
16 if you will, would be to have the two groups to
17 kind of meet because the advisory group serves at
18 the pleasure of the Council on this, as well as
19 all the other groups. There's really -- you know
20 the term limits are kind of set up that way, you
21 know, as we've set up, you know, through our own
22 guidelines and everything.

23 I would say that we pick a date, and maybe
24 it's January 1st, you know, on here to allow time
25 to have a consolidation plan drafted to have a

1 recommendation of a new advisory group, if you
2 will, which will be a combined group.

3 I just use the term "new" just to
4 differentiate, not that it will be a new group.

5 As has been noted, you know, it says that,
6 you know, the statute under 25-330 says it may
7 include representation. Obviously, they want to
8 make sure we are required to have a balance
9 between consumptive and non-consumptive interest.
10 That, we do have to have a balance of. That is a
11 'shall' in there. So we make sure it's on that.

12 Then it says, we may include representation.
13 That representation could include state agencies.
14 It could include all of this, and that would be
15 the recommendation I'd come back with on it.

16 And then as a Council we would then
17 appoint -- reappoint a new advisory committee that
18 would take effect January 1st, say. I'm just
19 saying that way it gives time to each committee to
20 finish up maybe what they're doing looking at
21 this.

22 Moving forward, obviously update, you know, I
23 know there's -- and I forgot if it's called --
24 it's not bylaws, but it's kind of like your
25 guiding principles -- that was adopted. That gets

1 updated, everything.

2 So we kind of have a target date. We're
3 going to combine these as of this date. Here's
4 where we're going through operating procedures.
5 Thank you, Alicea. I knew there was some term --
6 I couldn't remember what it was.

7 And I think then it sets a plan for us moving
8 forward where we're not just doing this voting
9 today, per se, and saying, okay. We're
10 consolidating these, boom. Done.

11 We've created a plan to move this forward to
12 consolidate the two groups, pick out what that
13 membership is now going to be, the new membership,
14 if you will, of the whole advisory group including
15 the best of both parts and everything.

16 And I think that would be the way, you know,
17 to move forward.

18 **THE CHAIRMAN:** I love that idea. I think that's a
19 great idea. It gives us something, because this
20 is setting the foundation for the Water Planning
21 Council moving forward. So you don't want to just
22 rush into it.

23 So I think that's a great -- Lori, you okay
24 with that?

25 **LORI MATHIEU:** Yes.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you, Martin.

2 Alicea and Virginia, you know what we're
3 looking for moving forward. Great. Good. Thank
4 you very much.

5 And finally, on the agenda today is next
6 steps for the planning retreat. Virginia put
7 together an excellent report for us in terms of
8 what happened at the retreat, and how we
9 re-energize.

10 It looks like we're re-energizing the Water
11 Planning Council today just by doing some merger
12 of the two groups and making it more efficient and
13 more streamlined.

14 But Virginia, would you like to go over the
15 report a little bit?

16 And then we'll also talk about the budget.

17 VIRGINIA de LIMA: I'll let you in on a little-known
18 secret. The worst person to ask for an overview
19 of a retreat is the facilitator. I actually had
20 Bruce Wittchen the next day say, so how did it go,
21 how it went?

22 You know, in the moment I am so focused on
23 who's talked. Has so-and-so done it? I've got to
24 cut this person off, and all that juggling of the
25 meeting itself that I am -- I won't say

1 completely, but largely dependent on the notes
2 that Ali Hibbard put together on that to get to
3 the specifics of what we talked about.

4 So if anybody else who was there wants to
5 jump in and add stuff, feel free to do so.

6 But one of the things that's already come up
7 in today's discussion, which was very prominent in
8 the retreat -- but before I get into a specific,
9 let me just say that the energy of that, and as
10 those of you who were there know that the original
11 intent was to come up with priorities for the next
12 round of focus of stuff, and we essentially threw
13 that out the window because the conversation that
14 was going on was so rich. And I felt it was
15 important to maintain that. And I think the
16 opportunity to both be in person and to have
17 general talk and input was great.

18 I want to thank each of the four, the Water
19 Planning Counselors -- and I'm sorry that Graham
20 isn't here -- for stepping back and listening,
21 that that was very much appreciated by the people
22 who were there.

23 That it was the group's retreat, as opposed
24 to the Water Planning Council's retreat. And I
25 think that's something that we should keep in mind

1 and perhaps schedule to do periodically to just
2 have listening sessions where folks can share
3 their thoughts and just have a different tone and
4 a different dynamic.

5 But that being said, going to the specifics
6 what we have done has not been advertised as much
7 as perhaps it should have been. There were
8 several comments that we need an advocate in the
9 legislature, or we need to have presentations or
10 forums with the legislation, similar to the one
11 that was done with PFAS where there was a lot of
12 engagement of the legislators themselves.

13 And to be able to get on radar screens,
14 because right now as was mentioned earlier today,
15 so we hand them this ten-page report once a year
16 and they sort of go, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah,
17 and they move on.

18 We need to have that, communicate that energy
19 to the Legislature and wave our flags and say,
20 this is important. You need to pay attention and
21 we're doing good stuff here, but we can't do it
22 without the support of resources.

23 And we've talked about monies. We've talked
24 about having a water director. And you know,
25 which comes first? Are we getting the cart before

1 the horse? Because clearly if we had a water
2 director one of their responsibilities would be to
3 get in the face of, or get on the radar of the
4 legislators. And so without that we can't get on
5 their radar, but without getting on their radar
6 they're not going to get us the money to do it.

7 So this is some of the challenge that we
8 have, but I think that's something that really
9 needs to be our high priority so that we become a
10 valuable resource for the Legislature and for the
11 public, which ultimately is the beneficiary of any
12 water related improvements that we do.

13 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Virginia.

14 And you don't seem to get the attention of
15 the Legislature until there's a crisis, I hate to
16 say. And I think Martin and Lori would agree with
17 me.

18 I mean, I think that we had a lot of, at the
19 beginning -- when I look back, it's 2014. That's
20 a long time ago when we started really putting
21 together the plan. We had consultants. We had a
22 million dollars. It's almost a decade ago
23 already.

24 So we really have to look at getting our
25 message out. Denise and her team has been doing a

1 great job, but I think we need to as a council do
2 more. I mean, we've had great support in the
3 Legislature from people like Mary Mushinsky, and
4 Steinberg and others that have been behind us.

5 But you know electric and renewable, and
6 green and all that, that's what we're competing
7 with up there right now. So point well taken, and
8 we'll just have to keep on moving forward in
9 terms of --

10 VIRGINIA de LIMA: Jack, that makes me think of
11 something. You said that we're competing with
12 these other related interests. Let's try and
13 change that from competing to coordinating with
14 and cooperating with.

15 And I think as a bunch of folks with very
16 similar concerns are much more powerful than doing
17 it as individual entities.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, you're absolutely right. As you
19 know, when I was president of the national
20 organization my whole theme was the water energy
21 nexus, because there's a lot of commonalities
22 between the two. And you know our largest
23 electric company owns our largest water company,
24 so we ought to be able to.

25 A very, very good point, Virginia.

1 A very, very good point.

2 VIRGINIA de LIMA: And I think John Harris -- Jonathan
3 Harris could be a great advocate for us because he
4 knows all sides of it, and he's now working for
5 whichever is the head -- Aquarion.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Eversource, Eversource.

7 VIRGINIA de LIMA: Whoever's on top, I think. And he
8 knows the legislature, obviously. He knows the
9 political climate. I think we should encourage
10 him to participate.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: And that's his job, quite frankly.

12 That's part of his job, is to do that, so.

13 Lori, your thoughts?

14 LORI MATHIEU: I like the idea of advocating together,
15 because as you mentioned, Jack, the energy, water,
16 everything that is being promoted, it has to be
17 seen as together.

18 And I think it starts in many, in many areas.
19 I think it starts with our, you know, very
20 impactful one-pager that it makes up our annual
21 report. And that we're clear with what our
22 funding needs are, and why.

23 Like, why are we important?

24 And Virginia, you always mentioned that, that
25 December 8th PFAS meeting that myself, Graham and

1 all of our teams worked so hard to put together.
2 And I remember that date very well because it was
3 very -- it was a very impactful meeting, and it
4 took a lot of effort.

5 You know we -- our commissioner presented,
6 you know, for 15 minutes on what was important to
7 the Department of Public Health. Commissioner
8 Dykes was there, and you know DEEP was there.

9 We had some really great input, and we were
10 at the LOB. And I think location makes a
11 difference and timing, so -- as well as
12 information, but brief information. Right?
13 Impactful information for people who care about
14 water. And I think people want to absorb that
15 information, but it has to be brief, succinct, and
16 important for people.

17 So you know, we talked about private wells.
18 We talked about use of herbicides, pesticides,
19 chemicals, PFAS. You know those are important
20 items for people to know more about -- and what is
21 our role in those areas is important to express.

22 And what do we actually accomplish and do? I
23 think one of the biggest accomplishments over the
24 last two years has been drought, drought planning,
25 that we are more coordinated than ever and ready

1 for whatever is coming our way. So I think we
2 really have to tell our story in a very impactful
3 way.

4 And Jack, you you've been at the legislature.
5 Right? You know what it takes to try to capture
6 attention. And so?

7 **THE CHAIRMAN:** I mean, really -- you really have to
8 spend a lot of time up there, no doubt about it.
9 And you know the legislature, there's such a
10 myriad of issues they have to deal with, but you
11 have to catch their attention.

12 Martin, I'm going to ask you. You sent an
13 e-mail about the budget process. And is this,
14 this year, a modification? It's not really a
15 budget year. Is it?

16 **MARTIN HEFT:** So correct, Jack. We're actually, you
17 know, because we, the State adopted a biennial
18 budget. The Legislature could go through and make
19 absolutely no adjustments whatsoever, but we know
20 that's few and far between.

21 It happened once during COVID.

22 But so what we call fiscal '25 will be
23 midterm budget adjustments on there where we could
24 ask for, you know, a request, you know, for
25 resources on here. They also look, obviously, for

1 reductions as well, but since we have a zero
2 budget we can't offer reductions for that.

3 So you know, there is -- they're asking for,
4 obviously, information to be in by October 1st for
5 that, which is typically of any state agency for
6 that with a list of things, you know, what does
7 the proposal, you know, intend to address? You
8 know, why is this an expansion option? Why do we
9 need this extra money.

10 I mean, we have statutes. We have the
11 documentation for that. Obviously we submitted
12 last year a biennial budget. So we do have
13 information on that to be able to provide.

14 We could simply kind of go in with our
15 proposed budget that we did last year and say,
16 okay. Well, we're only looking for the fiscal '25
17 amount. And then for the next biennium ask for,
18 you know, the other half of it, if you will.

19 That was just -- it was about a one -- 1.07
20 million budget over to, you know, each fiscal
21 year. 700,000 each year for a consultant to
22 update the state water plan, a durational project
23 manager, administrative support and then looking
24 at, you know, a water planning chief, you know,
25 type position for that.

1 I think there are some options, you know,
2 personally looking through on the water planning
3 chief side as we've talked about at the retreat
4 and everything of potentially starting with
5 something with UConn before we go into hiring a
6 consultant, you know, is -- let's start building
7 something first before maybe bringing someone
8 right in right away by hearing. Do an MOU type
9 thing, which could eliminate some funds, you know.

10 You know in that sense there there's also
11 some other things I'm trying to look through on
12 here just regarding with, you know, agency
13 staffing and everything to see -- okay. Could we
14 devote certain resources to the Water Planning
15 Council and be able to have that as a staff person
16 similar, like, as an example -- those who may be
17 unaware, the advisory commission on
18 intergovernmental relations, in the statute it
19 actually says that staffing is provided by OPM in
20 the statutes for ACIR.

21 Water Planning Council doesn't state where
22 that is from, but it does state under 22a-353 that
23 OPM is a designee for all the funding for the
24 Water Planning, for the update of the work, as
25 well as for designing a unified planning program

1 and budget.

2 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Well, there we go, Martin. Get us the
3 money, Martin. For God's sake? Come on.

4 **MARTIN HEFT:** I'm just saying I'm trying to work
5 through a few things, you know, to see what
6 options are there. So that's what I'm trying to
7 work on.

8 So I don't have anything definitive at this
9 point, you know, to say, but I think we could
10 definitely, you know, request, you know, the
11 consultant, maybe the durational project manager,
12 everything else, you know, those pieces of budget
13 which we said at least to get us started in that
14 update of saying, you know, we want to update in
15 '25. And then every five years or every, you
16 know, have that update, you know, to the water
17 plan to get us something in there.

18 I mean, I would probably recommend not asking
19 for the water planning chief at this point, you
20 know, for the mid-term budget. Let us work
21 through some things, and then that becomes part of
22 the next biennium budget. I mean, that would be
23 my kind of thought just so we get some more
24 clarity and have some more discussion on that
25 piece.

1 But we know that we want to update the state
2 water plan.

3 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Right.

4 **MARTIN HEFT:** It is in statute that we're supposed to
5 be doing that. We put that part of the budget in.
6 We have those numbers. We can re-request, if you
7 will, those for fiscal '25. That would be what,
8 you know, my thought process would be.

9 And then I'm still working on a couple of
10 other pieces there that might assist with some
11 other staffing and everything else as we're
12 looking through this.

13 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Okay. I know what you're saying, and I
14 think that we have to be very cautious. I think
15 that we're all at this point -- last time I
16 thought we had a good shot. You had really kind
17 of greased the skids, but it didn't happen.

18 But I think that we can get -- at least if we
19 get the funds to get a consultant in to help us do
20 some planning, and then the next real -- the
21 twenty-five -- no twenty-four, twenty --

22 **MARTIN HEFT:** Well, it will be the '26/'27 budget.

23 **THE CHAIRMAN:** '26/'27. I mean, then we could really
24 have a have a package put together to make it
25 happen.

1 MARTIN HEFT: Right, exactly. And that's my thought
2 process, too Jack. It's really, you know, so we
3 can.

4 And that gives us time to build up the
5 support, everything else that we need as well.
6 Figure out, you know, it may be that we go with
7 the water planning chief, or that we go this route
8 with doing something with UConn, per se or --

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

10 MARTIN HEFT: You know, but it will give us the time to
11 explore both options there and everything.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Exactly. Exactly. Okay.

13 MARTIN HEFT: So if you're fine with that, I mean, I
14 can work on getting, you know, that piece
15 submitted based upon the budget that we voted on
16 last year, which is the modification of pulling
17 out, you know, the water planning chief position.

18 So we'll actually come in with a reduced
19 budget, you know, for the midterm.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: I think that's a good plan moving
21 forward, I really do. So I don't know -- do we
22 have consensus here, Lori?

23 LORI MATHIEU: That? Yes, I think that's a great idea.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: I don't know if we need -- do we need a
25 motion? Because we're not going to be meeting

1 before October 1st.

2 And I want to make sure we get this in.

3 MARTIN HEFT: I mean, I can get it. I mean, it's up if
4 you want to do a motion that, you know, it's like
5 I'm not going to -- I don't have a bottom line
6 number to give you, but it's like that we, you
7 know, we did vote.

8 Let me think how we can do this.

9 We voted on the '24/'25 budget proposal. So
10 maybe a motion that OPM submits a fiscal '25
11 midterm budget adjustment for updating the state
12 water plan.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Perfect.

14 Lori, do you still move that?

15 LORI MATHIEU: Yes.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Second by martin.

17 And then we have something on record moving
18 forward.

19 MARTIN HEFT: Right.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Any discussion?

21
22 (No response.)

23
24 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sure Graham would be in total
25 agreement.

1 All those favor signify by saying, aye.

2 THE COUNCIL: Aye.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: The motion is carried.

4 LORI MATHIEU: Thank you, Martin.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Martin. That's
6 great.

7 Virginia, anything else? I know we've got to
8 look at next steps.

9 VIRGINIA de LIMA: No, I think what you're proposing to
10 do is an appropriate next step. I think we need
11 to continue working at a high level and not get
12 into the specifics of what recommendations we're
13 going to focus on until we really get the
14 structure and the process down.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, right -- which we discussed here
16 today. Agreed.

17 Okay. Our next -- it's been a long meeting,
18 but a very productive meeting, I think, today.
19 And our next meeting will be October 3rd.

20 Is there any public comment before we
21 adjourn? Anybody else wish to address the Council
22 before we adjourn?

23 Yes. Hi, Denise?

24 DENISE SAVAGEAU: Hi. Just quickly, in the chat I put
25 in that the Connecticut Council on Soil and Water

1 Conservation has just been notified that we're
2 receiving \$175,000 as part of our larger grant
3 that the National Association of Conservation
4 Districts put in with the U.S Forest Service.

5 This will be for doing landscape scale
6 restoration and looking at source water protection
7 areas, and doing forest and riparian restoration
8 and source water protection areas in the state.

9 So we've been working with Tyra Jacobs with
10 EPA, and Eric McPhee on source water protection
11 mapping, and we use that mapping to help apply for
12 this grant. So we're really excited about it.

13 The total grant for the National Association
14 of Conservation Districts is 600,000. That's for
15 13 states, and they're going to be coordinating an
16 effort between water resource managers and U.S
17 Forest Service and forest managers looking at
18 drinking water supplies.

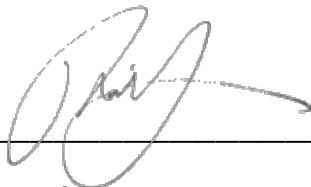
19 **THE CHAIRMAN:** Excellent.

20 **DENISE SAVAGEAU:** So that's within the 13 states, but
21 we're getting a good chunk as one of the pilot
22 states.

23 So I just wanted to let folks know that that
24 is happening. We've been talking about it, but
25 they finally announced the grant.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 98 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original verbatim notes taken of the Regular Meeting of the Water Planning Council, which was held before JOHN W. BETKOSKI, III, CHAIRMAN, and PURA VICE-CHAIRMAN, (via teleconference) on September 5, 2023.



Robert G. Dixon, CVR-M #857

Notary Public

My Commission Expires: 6/30/2025

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