

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

April 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

A telemeeting of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) was held by Zoom

Agenda: <https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/27932>

Video: https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2025-04-15_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Bonnie Burr	UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Kathy Czepiel	Save the Sound
Nicole Deziel	Yale School of Public Health
Len Greene	FirstLight
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
Patrick Kearney	New Britain Water Dept.
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Alison McHorney	CT Office of Consumer Counsel
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Martha Smith	New Haven West River Watershed Coalition
Tom Tyler	MDC
Steve Vitko	South Central CT Regional Water Authority

Other Participants:

Paul Aresta	CT Council on Environmental Quality
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville and Jewett City Water Co.s
Lauren Bergman (alt.)	CT Water Co.
Kim Czapla	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection
Becca Dahl	CT Office of Policy & Management
Virginia de Lima (alt.)	
Betsy Gara	CT Water Works Assoc.
Ali Hibbard	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection
Ray Jarema (alt.)	Berlin Water Dept.

Members Absent:

Sonia Brinckswirth	CT Association of Directors of Health
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Steve Woltornist	Marmon Water Residential Filtration/Water Quality Assoc.

Vacancies:

Recreation

Staff:

Bruce Wittchen	CT Office of Policy & Management
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1. Call to Order

Co-chair Dan Lawrence called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of draft 3/25/2025 Minutes

This section of the agenda was inadvertently skipped, so the group did not vote to approve the [draft minutes of the 3/25/2025 meeting](#).

3. Old Business

a. WPC and work group updates

- WPC meeting

Alicea Charamut provided an overview of this month's WPC meeting, highlighting that they approved the WPCAG member slate presented by this group, and that the meeting also included legislative and work group updates.

- 2025 WPC Work Plan

Alicea Charamut showed a series of slides regarding the WPC's [2025 Work Plan Priorities](#), noting that some requiring legislation are not addressed this session. She said federal funding cuts jeopardize positions at DEEP and DPH and also what nonprofits and water utilities are able to do. There was a discussion of re-prioritizing the [state water plan](#)'s recommendations with fresh eyes, given the changes since that was previously done. Virginia de Lima said we lack the capacity to implement many of the recommendations and recommended identifying 2-3 issues that can be addressed. Alicea noted that they are the WPC's priorities but this group can make recommendations.

Alicea said it is a shame that there has been so much pushback to the proposed state water plan update. Denise Savageau said the update is still included in [SB 9, An Act Concerning The Environment, Climate And Sustainable Municipal And State Planning, And The Use Of Neonicotinoids And Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides](#), (Sec. 21 of [File Copy 418](#)), but it without a deadline for an update. She emphasized the need to look at funding and said none of the WPC agencies takes the lead to push for a water plan budget.

There was a discussion of options for informing and getting new people involved with the water plan process, noting that two WPC members are new and acknowledging that many people who have been involved are aging out. Various options were identified and Alicea said she will recommend the WPC hold an in-person meeting.

Kathy Czepiel mentioned a discussion of considering what we are able to do directly vs what we can only recommend to the WPC. Alicea Charamut added that another factor is to consider is which actions are possible. She noted that DEEP was capable of addressing obsolete diversion registrations so did that. She also mentioned seeing what other groups are doing. Becca Dahl said the group should ensure the discussed in-person meeting is well-organized and there was a discussion of the time necessary to do so and of scheduling the meeting in the fall. Becca pointed out the timing

agency budget and legislative proposal deadlines and the group decided to target that meeting to August or September.

- [Outreach & Education Work Group](#)

Denise Savageau shared a draft version of the flyer for the next webinar, scheduled to be 5/29, and described planning for webinars in the fall. She said the group's next meeting will be 5/6 and said they want additional members, especially from WPC agencies, noting that DEEP is the only WPC agency represented.

- Source Water Protection Work Group & White Paper

Denise Savageau said the white paper is on hold, mentioning the need for DPH involvement and the significant changes in that agency, but added that she spoke about this with WPC member Chris Roy of DPH. She noted that, due to organizational changes, the source water group no longer reports to him.

Denise showed a [beta version](#) of the Community Renewable Energy Siting Tool (CREST) being developed by DEEP and provided some background. She said she is surprised DEEP has not brought that to the WPC and noted that DEEP has not included DPH's reservoir watershed mapping or mapping of highly erodible soils, highlighting the significance of those factors. She said the [CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation](#) will submit comments regarding that and emphasized the need to complete the white paper.

- Nominating Committee

Carol Haskins noted that the WPC approved the WPCAG member slate at its meeting this month and said WPC member Martin Heft provided a welcome letter for new members. She requested that members who have not yet named an alternate consider doing so.

- Watershed Lands Work Group

Steve Vitko said the group discussed relevant state water plan priorities at its most recent meeting to determine areas of interest. He described the work group's approach and said they will take up topics as they come up. He noted the group's interest in differences in Class 3 land disposition among different categories of water companies.

Steve mentioned three bills considered by the group: [HB 7174](#), *An Act Concerning Riparian Areas*, [HB 6830](#), *An Act Concerning Training For Members And Employees Of Inland Wetlands Agencies*, and [SB 732](#), *An Act Requiring The State Water Plan To Be Amended To Address Climate Change*, highlighting the latter's focus on the state water plan, even though that bill did not advance. Steve also mentioned a planned presentation at the group's summer meeting by DEEP's Kim Czapla regarding the [Aquifer Protection Area program](#) and the expectation for another in the fall by DPH. He also mentioned the [Watershed Assessment Tool](#) available from UConn's [Center for Land Use Education and Research](#) (CLEAR).

b. 2025 legislative session

Alicea Charamut explained that committees are done with hearings and listed a number of bills of potential interest to this group, including the previously-discussed SB 9; [SB 884](#), *An Act Concerning The Maximum Allowable Concentration For 1,4-Dioxane In Household Cleaning And Personal Care Products And Cosmetics*; and [SB 1292](#), *An Act Requiring A Study Concerning Energy Efficiency Requirements For Artificial Intelligence Data Centers*.

Alicea also mentioned other bills, including two regarding release-based remediation standards: [SB 1404](#) and [HB 7085](#); [HB 6249](#), *An Act Limiting Appeals Under The Connecticut Environmental Protection Act*; [HB 6777](#), *An Act Concerning Water Utility Systems And Water Quality And Treatment Surcharges*; and [HB 6977](#), *An Act Concerning The Department Of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Drinking Water*. Alicea also mentioned bills that did not get out of committee.

Betsy Gara provided the [CT Water Works Assoc.](#)'s (CWWA's) perspective regarding some bills of interest to water utilities. Alicea mentioned negotiations regarding pesticide language and asked Betsy about the water industry perspective on PFAS contamination. Betsy mentioned the [CT Interagency PFAS Task Force](#) and suggested the WPC request an update from the task force. Alicea asked about the previously-mentioned HB 6777 and Betsy said it is in good shape but there could be pushback due to the impact on customers' rates. Betsy also mentioned [SB 1326](#), *An Act Concerning The Department Of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Food Safety And Oral Health*.

Betsy also described differences of opinion regarding [HB 7248](#), *An Act Concerning Well Water Quality*, and outlined the disagreement between those who say data regarding contaminated wells should be confidential to protect the financial interest of current property owners and those who say it should be publicly available due to the public health interest in it. Alicea referred to HB 7174, which had been mentioned during the Watershed Lands Work Group update, and noted its significance to water supplies and cold-water fisheries.

c. Other old business

- Website changes

There was no update

- WUCC update

Dan Lawrence mentioned a discussion with DPH regarding WUCC plan updates and mentioned some reconsideration of what must be included in those plans, highlighting the question of whether fire hydrant locations are necessary. He also said WUCCs are receiving few requests from developers. Jonathan Avery mentioned that the WUCC are recruiting new leaders as previous ones age out, similar to what was described earlier regarding people involved in previous water planning. He also added that he agrees with people advocating for more meetings to be in-person.

- Interagency Drought Work Group

Becca Dahl said the [Interagency Drought Work Group](#) (IDW) met 4/3/2025 and recommended the drought stage be reduced to Stage 1 statewide. Alicea Charamut asked about reservoir levels and Becca said they are above the threshold that would trigger Stage 2. Dan Lawrence added that Aquarion's reservoirs are doing well, and provided further details. Steve Vitko said the Regional Water Authority (RWA) had been concerned during Dec. – Jan but reservoir totals are now above the long-term average for this time of year. He mentioned that some small reservoirs that supply a large reservoir remain low but are now being allowed to refill. Alicea asked about ground water and Steve Vitko described the RWA's indirect approach for monitoring conditions in its limited well fields and Becca mentioned the [USGS data](#) considered by the IDW.

4. New Business

There was no new business.

5. Public Comment

There were no further public comments.

6. Upcoming Meetings

Alicea Charamut noted the upcoming meeting dates and added that the Watershed Lands Work Group's next quarterly meeting will be 3/14/2025.

May 6, 2025	Education & Outreach Work Group (9:00)
May 6, 2025	WPC (1:30)
May 8, 2025	Interagency Drought Work Group (1:00)
May 20, 2025	Source Water Protection Work Group (9:00)
May 20, 2025	WPCAG (1:30)

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:51.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM