

CONNECTICUT ENVIRONMENTAL BRIEFINGS



2015



CONNECTICUT LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS
EDUCATION FUND



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EDUCATION FUND

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2015 Connecticut Environmental Briefings

Since 2004, the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters Education Fund has produced briefing materials on a broad array of environmental issues for state legislators, policy makers, media, and the general public. This year we have highlighted ten issues that are of critical importance to Connecticut's economy, public health and safety. We will update this report with additional briefing papers as the issues develop during the legislative session.

We are indebted to the many members of the environmental community who contributed to these briefs and to those advocates who continue to fight every day to protect our state's great natural legacy for future generations. A special thank you to Eric Emanuelson, the author and coordinator of these briefs, and CPRdesignco for their final editing, photography and design.

Lori Brown, Executive Director
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2015 Briefing Papers

Supporting Connecticut's Water Plan
Pesticides: Playing Fields for Children
Long Island Sound Blue Plan
Protecting Open Space
Permanent Protection of State Conservation Lands
Shared Solar and Clean Distributed Generation
Plastic Microbead
Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs)
Improving Transportation
Banning Plastic Shopping Bags

About the CTLCV Education Fund

Our mission is to strengthen Connecticut's environmental movement through education, developing and providing information on issues, and organizing networks of environmental groups to access political power in furtherance of protecting Connecticut's natural resources.

The CTLCV Education Fund works to get more conservation-minded people involved in the political process by providing the tools and information they need to make informed choices at election time. We help to build a stronger environmental presence in the State Legislature and empowering Connecticut residents to protect the environment.



Indian Neck, Branford

SUPPORTING CONNECTICUT'S WATER PLAN

WHY DOES CONNECTICUT NEED A STATE-WIDE WATER PLAN?

Connecticut has long struggled to devise a statewide plan for stewardship of our water resources to ensure now and for the future that we have ample, high-quality water in our streams, wetlands, aquifers, reservoirs, and well fields.

Legislation calling for a statewide water supply plan passed back in 1967; however, the plan was never completed. Subsequently, there have been repeated administrative and legislative efforts to protect water resources. In 2001, the General Assembly created the Water Planning Council (WPC), comprising the four state agencies with responsibilities for water. The Council also has a multi-stakeholder advisory group. But its authority and accomplishments have been limited, and funding has been low to zero.

Interest in a state-wide water plan spiked again in 2013 when a controversial proposal by the MDC to divert millions of gallons of water from the Farmington River to meet increased water demand for development on the Storrs UConn campus, created a public uproar. Eventually, a better solution emerged for supplying water to UConn. However, the controversy highlighted the urgent need for a state-wide, comprehensive water plan.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE STATE-WIDE WATER PLAN?

Governor Malloy has called water the state's most valuable natural resource and committed to supporting the creation of an effective, comprehensive state water plan. With leadership from both the Governor and legislators, last year Connecticut adopted PA 14-163, which mandates the creation of a comprehensive statewide water plan. The Act includes the following provisions:

- Empowers and directs the state's Water Planning Council (WPC) to prepare a state water plan by July 1, 2017.
- Criteria for protecting water supply and water in nature.
- Allows input from a wide variety of stakeholders in the planning of the state water plan.
- Addresses supply distribution infrastructure and many other technical aspects of water management.

The WPC has contracted with Tom Callahan of UConn to be the Project Manager. Mr. Callahan will be on loan from UConn for two days per week. The Water Planning Council has been consulting with its advisory group as required in the statute, which is studying existing

The proposal to divert millions of gallons of water from the Farmington River to the Storrs UConn campus highlighted the urgent need for a state-wide, comprehensive water plan.



SUPPORTING CONNECTICUT'S WATER PLAN *continued*

plans in other states. The Council is also considering a working relationship with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control (NEIWPC) based in Lowell, Massachusetts.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

While the progress from last year is encouraging, there are still matters of concern with the existing plan:

1. Obtaining adequate funding for the work.

2. Allocating the funding prudently.

At this time 70% of available funds (\$250,000) seem to be ticketed for the Department of Public Health for water supply planning via the Water Utility Coordinating Committees (WUCCs), rather than to comprehensive planning for how the resource of water is used.

3. Accessing the data needed for planning.

Much of this data is not accessible to the public under current Freedom of Information law. This barrier should be removed to facilitate meaningful public input.

The Governor, legislature and local officials recognize that statewide water funding is extremely important to the economic and ecological future of Connecticut. The FY 2016-2017 budget must ensure adequate funding to the statewide water plan and proper distribution of those funds between water supply and natural water within the project.

Governor Malloy recently released his proposed FY 2016-2017 budget with some cuts to water conservation projects. Adequate funding for Connecticut's state-wide water plan will be part of the ongoing budget discussions in 2015.

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PESTICIDES: PLAYING FIELDS FOR CHILDREN

WHAT IS CONNECTICUT'S CURRENT PESTICIDE BAN?

In 2005, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to prohibit the use of lawn-care pesticides on the grounds of elementary schools. The pesticide ban was expanded in 2007 to include the grounds at schools through grade eight, and again in 2009 to include day care centers.

There are special exceptions to the law that allow for emergency applications of certain pesticides at schools under specific circumstances, such as for treating stinging insects, ticks or other situations that might endanger public health.

Sadly, despite research warning of significant health risks from exposure to pesticide chemicals for children of all ages, Connecticut's current law does not apply to high schools, state and municipal parks, playgrounds or playing fields.

WHAT IS THE DEBATE?

The industry surrounding the production and application of lawn-care pesticides includes chemical companies, lawn care businesses and facility grounds crews. The industry and groundskeepers argue that restricting the use of lawn-care pesticides would be a costly hardship and problematic for good maintenance, especially for high school playing fields which experience more wear-and-tear than elementary school fields.

The successful use of organic lawn care on some municipal, public playing fields, such as Branford and Cheshire, proves otherwise. Fields in those towns have not been treated with toxic pesticides for over five years and are in good playing condition, demonstrating that the use of toxic pesticides is unnecessary when the fields are properly cared for.

Studies have linked many commonly used lawn pesticides to health issues including cancer, asthma, birth defects, negative reproductive effects and abnormal brain development. Children are particularly susceptible to these dangers because of their rapid growth and reduced ability to detoxify toxins as they absorb chemicals through direct contact with skin, inhalation, or accidental ingestion. Research shows that even low levels of exposure to pesticides can have a long-term effect on a child's health.

Every year, the current ban is threatened. The pesticide chemical industry continues to push for rollbacks of Connecticut's current pesticides legislation by lobbying for legislation that will allow the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or greater exceptions allowing for use of a

Branford and Cheshire have proven that the use of toxic pesticides is unnecessary when the fields receive proper care.



PESTICIDES: PLAYING FIELDS FOR CHILDREN continued

wider variety of toxic pesticides in the event of undefined emergencies. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) allows for the use of synthetic chemical pesticides at the discretion of the licensed applicators. When IPM has been allowed in other states it has proven to be unenforceable, as it is impossible to monitor or restrict the amounts used and/or the frequency of any pesticide applications.

WHAT ABOUT THE COST?

A study in New York has shown that while the initial expense of implementing an organic turf management program is slightly more than continuing an existing IPM program, organic turf management is cheaper in the long run. The study estimates a net savings on expenditures realized in the first 5 years and annual savings of approximately 25% after that.

ARE SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS A SAFE ALTERNATIVE?

With more playing fields being converted from grass to synthetic turf, there needs to be a new study concerning the impact of the materials used in these fields on public health. Many synthetic turf fields use crumb rubber as an infill. Crumb rubber is created from worn out tires that contain many toxic chemicals, particles of which are not meant to be inhaled and ingested by our children. These dangerous toxins can leech into our ground water or go into the air that our playing children breathe. Until the safety of synthetic fields is proven, they should not be seen as viable alternative to organically maintained grass fields.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Expand the pesticide ban

The legislature should expand the current pesticide ban to include high schools, public parks, greens and other spaces where children play. The bill should include an exception for certain nontoxic microbial and biochemical pesticides that can help control grubs. Expanding the ban will create a consistent policy for municipalities and better protect our children from being regularly and involuntarily exposed to the harmful effects of toxic pesticides.

In 2015, the General Assembly is considering legislation that would expand the pesticide ban to include high schools, municipal greens and municipal athletic fields. The proposed legislation does allow for certain microbial pesticides to be used to control grubs.

Ensure successful transitions to organic care

Municipal leaders have expressed a willingness to move to organic lawn care practices if the state can defray the initial costs of implementation. The legislature should appropriate \$800,000 in a special fund to help offset the initial costs for municipalities and ensure a successful transition to organic turf management. While the General Assembly is not considering specific legislation that would create this fund, defraying the costs faced by municipalities transitioning to organic lawn care practices should be part of the ongoing budget negotiations.

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Stony Creek, Branford

WHY DO WE NEED A LONG ISLAND SOUND INVENTORY AND BLUE PLAN?

Long Island Sound (LIS) is the Northeast's largest estuary and it includes some of the nation's most productive natural habitats. The Sound is crucial to the way of life of the more than 20 million people who live within 50 miles of its waters, generating billions of dollars annually for local economies through tourism, fishing, boating, and other uses.

Today there are mounting demands for use of the Sound, from new energy development and the prospect of underwater tunnels, to new forms of aquaculture.

The character of the Sound could be significantly changed with one major development project, as prospects for approval of the Broadwater Liquefied Natural Gas facility proposal in 2001 showed.

Currently, Connecticut has no authority to comprehensively plan for multiple future uses of the Sound. Project applicants set the agenda, and the public and DEEP and other agencies can respond only through the regulatory process to individual projects. This does not allow Connecticut to be proactive in securing the best future for the Sound in the public interest including sustaining the social, environmental and economic benefits upon which we depend.

WHAT WOULD AN INVENTORY AND BLUE PLAN DO?

A Long Island Sound Inventory and Blue Plan would be a science-based process for inventorying current uses and resources in coastal and offshore waters and using that information to guide new future uses. The Plan would seek to protect traditional uses such as boating, fishing, shipping and aquaculture along with critical natural resources by reducing potential conflicts among uses and minimizing environment impacts from possible new uses so that economic, environmental, security, and social objectives for the Sound can be met.

A Working Group of representatives of Connecticut and New York state agencies, federal agencies, user groups, such as the Marine Trades Association, and conservation organizations, has been working for two years to assess the current state of information and data availability and discuss how an inventory and plan can best be compiled and developed.

Without legislative authorization, however, an inventory and plan will not be legally binding in Connecticut waters. For a Blue Plan to legally influence federal agency projects and

Currently Connecticut lacks the authority to plan for the best future for the Sound. Just one major development project could change its character.



LONG ISLAND SOUND BLUE PLAN *continued*

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permitting, the plan would need to be “incorporated” through legislation into CT’s federally approved coastal management program.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE BLUE PLAN LEGISLATION?

The two essential elements of the Blue Plan legislation are:

1. The development of a LIS Inventory and Plan by state agencies working with stakeholders to compile the best available data on resources and uses and
2. DEEP authority to use the plan to implement the state’s existing regulatory and proprietary authority over our public trust waters.

In 2015, the General Assembly is considering legislation that will establish a Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory, and a Long Island Sound Blue Plan to become part of the state’s coastal management program.

PROTECTING OPEN SPACE

Hurd State Park,
East Hampton

WHY IS OPEN SPACE IMPORTANT?

Open space land is, in many ways, the trademark of Connecticut. Our state's beautiful and diverse landscape contributes to our prosperity, public health and high quality of life. Open space protects our natural resources, like clean drinking water and many fragile ecosystems. Farms, forests and beaches provide recreation for residents and draw tourism dollars into our communities. Further economic benefits were noted in a study conducted by UConn's Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis that quantified approximately 9,000 jobs and \$1 billion annually through the protection of open space lands associated with state parks.

In 1999, Connecticut set a goal of preserving 21% of its land as protected open space by 2023, with at least 10% of that land owned by the state and the rest owned by municipalities, land conservation organizations, and water companies. While a 2010 report indicated that the state was 73% of the way towards the goal, in 2013 the state protected only 1,068 acres — 4,932 acres less than what needs to be protected annually in order to reach the 2023 benchmark.

As the economy continues to improve, there will be mounting pressure to increase development and land protection efforts will become more expensive as a result. Connecticut can and must take several specific steps now to keep its commitment to acquiring and preserving open space in 2015 and beyond.

HOW DOES THE STATE INCREASE ITS OPEN SPACE?

The state has two primary programs run by DEEP to acquire or help acquire new open space lands:

1. The Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program

The Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program allows the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to purchase lands for preservation by the State. Lands acquired through the Program must provide high quality recreational, conservation or ecological values. The lands DEEP acquires are added to Connecticut's system of state forests, parks and open space and that counts towards the state-owned portion of the 2023 open space goal.

2. The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program

The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program provides grant funding to municipalities, nonprofit land organizations, and water companies to help them obtain lands for open space and water supply protection. This program is designed to enable towns and nonprofit land organizations to help Connecticut meet its open space preservation goals.

Connecticut can and must keep its commitment to acquiring and preserving open space in 2015.



PROTECTING OPEN SPACE *continued*

Despite support for preservation from the Governor and legislators on both sides of the aisle, Connecticut ranks behind its neighbors in the percentage of state lands preserved for open space.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Protect Funding

This is an important year for Connecticut and its efforts to increase protected open space land. The Community Investment Act (CIA), created in 2005 and funded by a \$40 surcharge on document recording fees collected by municipal clerks across the state, provides approximately \$5 million annually to the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed FY 16-17 budget currently diverts over \$40 million from the CIA, nearly emptying the account. The diversion of these important monies will be part of this year's budget debate in the legislature.

Increase Access to Non-State Grants

In addition to protecting the CIA, the state should eliminate the 70% cap on federal and state matching grants for open space and agricultural land preservation as required by 7-131g(c) in the Connecticut General Statutes.

Mandating that municipalities and land organizations trying to protect conservation lands raise at least 30% of the funds from non-state or federal sources is a huge, sometimes prohibitive burden, especially in less affluent communities lacking municipal funds or local land trusts incapable of covering the gap.

The statute should be changed now so our land trusts and municipalities can stop turning down federal grant money and help our state achieve the 21% state land preservation goal by 2023.

In 2015, the General Assembly is considering a bill that will remove this 70% cap on state and federal matching grants for open space and agricultural land preservation.

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PERMANENT PROTECTION OF STATE CONSERVATION LANDS

WHY ARE STATE CONSERVATION LANDS AT RISK?

Although Connecticut has over 255,000 acres of state parks, forests and open space classified as state conservation land, there are big loopholes that put these conservation lands at risk of being developed or used for unintended or inappropriate purposes.

Currently, the state's Conveyance Act allows the state legislature to convey or swap, sell or give away parcels of conservation land. In most instances, there is no legal protection to ensure the purposes for which the land was acquired are honored. There is typically nothing recorded in the deeds or town land records that either requires permanent protection, or clearly references the intended use or purpose of the land.

These legislative decisions for land swaps, made possible through the Conveyance Act, are often done behind closed doors with little public notice or comment. Past controversial land swaps, such as the proposed 2011 Haddam land swap, have spotlighted the flaws in the current process and created public distrust of the state's commitment to keep our conservation lands protected forever.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR CONNECTICUT?

State conservation lands have many proven economic benefits. For instance, a 2013 UConn study showed that Connecticut's State Parks net over \$1.2 billion in annual revenue for our economy. Besides the revenue produced through recreational activities and jobs, state conservation land was also found to increase local property values since people are willing to pay more to live near conservation land. Additionally, thousands of volunteers invest their own time and money to help maintain these lands.

Preservation of our state conservation lands is critical to a healthy and vital ecosystem in Connecticut. Our natural resources — our water, air, forests, and wildlife — are at risk without changes to close the loopholes to ensure real protection of these lands in perpetuity. A transparent process will help ensure public lands are protected for their agricultural, conservation, and recreational purposes instead of swapped for development.

The CT Conveyance Act lacks the legal protection to ensure the purposes for which the land was acquired are honored.

A transparent process will help ensure public lands are protected.



PERMANENT PROTECTION OF STATE CONSERVATION LANDS *continued*

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Pass a constitutional amendment

Connecticut should pass a constitutional amendment that mandates a new, transparent process for considering conveyances of public conservation, recreation and agricultural lands. A change to our State Constitution is the only way to ensure a conveyance process receives public input on every proposal and every parcel.

Use existing authority

While a constitutional protection is the best solution, the process for amending Connecticut's Constitution takes several years. Last year, the legislature gave specific authority to both Department of Agriculture (DoAG) and the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to place conservation restrictions on public recreation and agricultural lands with high conservation value. Both agencies should actively use this authority to protect lands through conservation easements and deed restrictions as enabled in PA 14-169.

Require a public hearing

Legislation or a change to the Joint Rules is needed to require the final version of the land conveyance bill and any sale, transfer or conversion of state-owned lands held for agricultural, conservation or recreational purposes to have a proper public hearing before the Environment Committee. Though the Environment Committee has jurisdiction over most matters that affect the DoAG or the DEEP, the Committee currently has no right to hold a public hearing on the conveyance of lands under the custody and control of these departments — this has to change.

Connecticut is fortunate to have beautiful open spaces with natural resources that allow us to live, play and work. It is only right to involve the public when the state legislature looks to convey or swap, sell or give away, publicly-owned conservation lands.

In 2015, the General Assembly is considering legislation that will require notice, an appraisal and the opportunity for a public hearing in the town where the parcel is located prior to the exchange of state land controlled by DEEP or DoAG.

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SHARED SOLAR & CLEAN DISTRIBUTED GENERATION

WHAT IS IT?

Our aging energy system is in need of modernization. Clean distributed generation (DG), such as solar, fuel cells, and combined heat and power, is a way to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, increase energy efficiency, and improve storm resiliency. Clean DG energy resources create renewable energy at or near the point of consumption, rather than in far-away power plants.

Clean DG has greatly improved in efficiency, providing consumers with low-emission, locally generated energy that avoids significant transmission and distribution losses and alleviates the burden on the grid, much like energy efficiency. While Connecticut consumers who have installed solar panels can sell their excess energy back to the grid for compensation through something called net metering, this is not possible with shared resources.

Shared solar, also known as community or virtual solar, is a clean DG program that allows customers who cannot install their own solar panels to purchase energy from a shared solar system. In Connecticut, approximately 80% of residents cannot install rooftop solar due to insufficient roof space, excessive shade, or use of a rental or leased property. Through shared solar programs, these consumers would be able to purchase energy credits from a solar system in a local field or neighbor's home. Thus, shared solar effectively increases Connecticut residents' access to the technology.

WHAT IS THE DEBATE?

Utility companies claim that users who have access to clean DG energy or shared solar programs avoid transmission fees and so pass on the cost of maintaining the grid to non-participating ratepayers; however, studies in Minnesota, North Carolina, and elsewhere have shown that shared DG actually provides a benefit to other ratepayers from reduced transmission and energy production requirements.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Determine the Value of Clean DG

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) should be required to develop a methodology to figure out the value that clean DG provides to ratepayers, the grid, and society. Minnesota has developed a methodology that can be used as a model.

Clean distributed generation reduces our dependence on fossil fuels, increases energy efficiency, and improves storm resiliency.



SHARED SOLAR & CLEAN DISTRIBUTED GENERATION continued

Offer a Clean DG Tariff to Consumers

Consumers who have clean DG resources deserve compensation for energy they provide to the grid. Net metering works well but does not apply to all resources. The state should develop a value of clean DG tariff. Consumers and businesses with clean DG would choose to receive credit using either net metering or the tariff.

Authorize Shared Solar

Connecticut should authorize shared solar systems to operate in the state. Shared solar will make solar energy more widely available for residents, help Connecticut achieve its clean energy and climate goals, improve the grid's resiliency from severe storms, create more renewable energy jobs, and lower energy rates in the long term.

In 2015, the General Assembly is considering several relevant bills that allow for the use of shared clean distributed generation energy facilities and net metering of class I renewable energy sources.

bill numbers may change. For reference, see SB 928 & HB 6989

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PLASTIC MICROBEADS

WHAT ARE PLASTIC MICROBEADS?

Polyethylene microspheres or plastic microbeads are a popular new ingredient used in over 100 different personal care products on the market today. Manufacturers use these tiny plastic microbeads as an abrasive in a wide variety of facial scrubs, soaps, cosmetics and even toothpastes.

They can range in size from one millimeter to as small as a blood cell or grain of sand. Researchers estimate that a single product can contain as many as 350,000 plastic microbeads. Once they are washed down the drain, microbeads enter into waterways where they endanger aquatic wildlife and threaten human health.

WHY ARE THEY A PROBLEM?

Microbeads can enter into waterways through sewage overflows or by passing through municipal sewage treatment plants, which are not equipped to remove them from the waste stream. Without very expensive retrofitting, microbeads pass through treatment plants and then flow into streams, rivers, and lakes, eventually reaching Long Island Sound and the ocean. Scientists have found microplastic particles in every ocean, bay, gulf and estuary in the world. A recent study done in Lake Ontario found as many 1.1 million plastic particles floating around per square kilometer.

Once in the water, microbeads act like tiny sponges, absorbing toxins, such as poly-aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), flame retardants (e.g., PCBs), and bisphenol-A (BPA). The microbeads are often mistaken for fish eggs and eaten by small fish and aquatic wildlife. Studies show that when fish and aquatic life consume plastic, chemicals contained in the plastics can bio-accumulate in their body, meaning they can be passed up the food chain to larger fish, wildlife, and ultimately humans.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

In order to decrease plastic contaminants in its rivers, lakes and Long Island Sound, Connecticut should prohibit the import and sale of personal cosmetic products that contain plastic microbeads measured to be five millimeters or less.

Safer, cost-effective alternatives are already beginning to replace plastic microbeads in many products. Pumice, ground cocoa beans, and nutshells are natural abrasives that are truly

Researchers estimate that a single product can contain as many as 350,000 plastic microbeads. When fish consume microbeads, chemicals absorbed in the beads can be passed up the food chain to larger fish, wildlife, and ultimately humans.



PLASTIC MICROBEADS *continued*

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biodegradable and do not have the same adverse impact on wildlife as plastics. It is important that even “biodegradable” plastic microbeads be included in the ban, as they still absorb the same toxins and take at least 6 months to break apart.

In 2015, the legislature is considering a bill that will prohibit the import and sale of personal cosmetic products containing plastic Microbeads measured 5mm or less in size. Passing this measure will help protect the environment and public health in Connecticut.



ZERO EMISSION VEHICLES

WHAT ARE ZEVS?

Zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) include electric vehicles (EVs) and other vehicles that emit zero tailpipe emissions, such as fuel cell vehicles. Some models include a small gas tank as a backup source of fuel, but they rely primarily on electricity and are still much cleaner than internal-combustion vehicles.

Approximately 40% of Connecticut's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from transportation. Gas-powered cars and trucks also cause local air pollution, which can harm public health. ZEVs are 70% cleaner than conventional vehicles, even taking into account GHG emissions caused by generating electricity used to charge electric vehicles. Encouraging ZEV use will improve Connecticut's air quality and help the state reach its GHG emissions goals under the Comprehensive Energy Strategy and Global Warming Solutions Act.

WHY DO WE NEED INCENTIVES?

ZEVs are gaining in popularity, but there are still many barriers that prevent more Connecticut residents from driving an electric or fuel cell car. First, ZEVs are more expensive than comparable gasoline cars. Also, consumers who regularly travel long distances must investigate whether the electric vehicle charging infrastructure is sufficient to ensure that they can reach their destination without running out of power.

In the mid 2000s, financial incentives such as rebates and sales tax exemptions enabled hybrid cars to become mainstream. While these incentives for hybrids have since expired, almost every major car company now offers one or several hybrid models at a much more competitive and affordable price.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PROMOTE ZEVS?

There are a variety of incentives that can help increase ZEV sales as required by the Connecticut Clean Cars Statute:

Financial Incentives

Currently, people who purchase a new ZEV are eligible to receive up to a \$7,500 tax credit from the federal government. Connecticut should offer an additional rebate or sales tax exemption of \$2,500-\$5,000 on purchase or lease to make ZEVs more affordable compared to similar gasoline models. These incentives have proven effective in other states. The legislature should

ZEVs are 70% cleaner than conventional vehicles. Encouraging ZEV use will improve Connecticut's air quality and help the state reach its Green House Gas emissions goals.



ZERO EMISSION VEHICLES *continued*

also consider requiring nighttime electric rates to be reduced to encourage drivers to charge their vehicles at home when energy demand is lowest.

Infrastructure Incentives

Connecticut currently has over 180 electric vehicle charging stations and is continuing with plans to install more. DEEP has a strong goal of having a charging station within 10 minutes of any location within the state. In order to help quickly expand Connecticut's charging network, the legislature should provide tax incentives to encourage businesses to install charging stations.

Other Incentives

There are other ways to make owning or leasing a ZEV attractive other than reducing the cost. Connecticut should look for ways to offer benefits to ZEV drivers, including unrestricted access to HOV lanes, free parking, and more reserved parking spaces in garages and lots.

In addition to these incentives, Connecticut can also update the building code to facilitate EV charging infrastructure, ensure the electrical grid is prepared for increased charging, streamline the municipal permitting process, and lead by example by purchasing ZEVs for the state's fleets.

In 2015, the General Assembly is considering legislation that creates financial incentives for purchasing ZEVs.

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Train Station, Guilford

IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Connecticut residents, businesses, workers, and visitors deserve a reliable transportation system that moves people and goods on time, every time.

They deserve a safe system — bridges are in good repair, train derailments are a thing of the past, and fewer of our citizens are harmed while crossing the street or driving a car.

They deserve a system that supports multiple options. Families have safe sidewalks and bike lanes in their neighborhoods, roads are safer and less congested, and expanded and affordable rail and bus service allows everyone to participate in the economy and promotes a cleaner and healthier environment in which to live.

It's time for Connecticut to provide a stable, reliable and long-term funding source and start investing in its aging transportation infrastructure. There is not one area of need, nor one solution that will put the state on the path to a better, greener and more effective transit system — everything must be on the table.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Protect Funding

Since 2005, \$1.2 billion of the state's gas taxes have gone into the general fund, instead of being used as a down payment on the transportation improvements the state needs. Connecticut must quickly repair this breach of the public trust. Last year, lawmakers passed legislation restricting the use of transportation funds for transportation projects. That was a good start, but only an amendment to the state constitution can keep the transportation fund in a protected lockbox.

Expedite Projects

Improving ConnDOT's ability to deliver projects could add thousands of new jobs in Connecticut next year and expedite much needed improvements across all modes of transportation. Authorized funding must turn into designed and constructed projects in a timely fashion, which could have a positive, lasting effect on Connecticut's workforce, infrastructure, and economy. Expediting projects can be done in a number of ways, from faster design and bidding, to allowing regional agencies to take on more responsibility for small projects.

It's time for Connecticut to provide a stable, reliable and long-term funding source, and start investing in its aging transportation infrastructure — every solution must be on the table.



IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION continued

Plan for the Uncertain Future

After 2014, Connecticut faces a transportation-funding cliff. Federal funding is projected to sharply decline, and authorities estimate that the state could see up to an 87% reduction in federal transportation funds. Connecticut needs a plan for this worst-case scenario, and can look to its peers: While Washington has not addressed the funding challenge, dozens of states — from Wyoming to Massachusetts — have chosen to dedicate more funding to transportation.

Invest Wisely

Connecticut has huge needs, both to repair our infrastructure, and improve the highway and transit systems in key areas, including high-speed rail and increased rail service across the state. Million- and billion-dollar decisions about how to invest have to be justified and prioritized using cost-benefit analysis. The decisions must be made through a broad, statewide process with a long-range perspective of reducing congestion and improving the economy and the environment.

This year, in his budget address to the legislature, Governor Malloy reiterated his support for creating a lockbox for transportation funding. The Governor has also released a 30-year, \$100 billion transportation plan, with an immediate 5-year, \$10 billion ramp-up period that includes \$1.7 billion for rail improvements, \$43 million in bus improvements and \$101 million for bicycle and pedestrian trails. Funding for transportation projects will be part of the ongoing budget negotiations in 2015.

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BANNING PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Plastic and paper “single-use” shopping bags have become a staple of shopping in our country. Connecticut residents use approximately 400 million plastic bags annually, carrying them home from stores with groceries and all sorts of other goods. Unfortunately, studies have shown that only 5-10% of these plastic bags are properly recycled nationwide.

What happens to the other 90-95% of discarded plastic bags? Most enter the solid waste system and end up slowly degrading in landfills over hundreds of years or contribute to toxic emissions at waste-to-energy facilities. Lightweight plastic bags get blown out of trashcans, garbage trucks or landfills and pollute our waterways. Plastic bags clog gutters and sewers, get caught in trees and end up in our rivers, lakes and oceans. Non-biodegradable bags pose a threat to avian and marine wildlife, entangling them or poisoning and choking them if the animal mistakes the bag for food.

The average plastic bag is used for about 12 minutes, but causes damage to the environment for over 1,000 years. Reducing the use of disposable shopping bags will ease the burden on our waste management system, cut down on pollution and help to protect our waterways and wildlife.

WHAT IS THE DEBATE?

There are economic, environmental and practical benefits to replacing disposable plastic bags with reusable bags. Reusable shopping bags are more environmentally friendly than single-use plastic bags. Analysis conducted by California State University found reusable bags made from recycled polyethylene use 50% less energy, result in 40% lower emissions of climate pollution, and use 30% less water to produce than traditional, disposable plastic bags.

Reusable shopping bags will provide practical and economic benefits to Connecticut residents and waste management businesses. Reusable shopping bags can hold twice as many items as conventional plastic bags, do not burst under the weight of heavy items, are inexpensive and can be used many times. Improperly discarded plastic bags get stuck in the machinery that processes single stream recyclables, costing recycling facilities in repairs and the expense associated with those machines being off-line.

Retailers argue that removing plastic shopping bags from stores will harm consumers by adding an additional cost to their bill. Closer examination reveals that disposable bags are not, in fact, provided for free to customers. Stores pass the cost of plastic bags on to consumers in

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BANNING PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS *continued*

the price of the goods they sell. Analysis of the marketplace in California estimated that the average household paid \$17 annually in higher grocery prices to cover the cost of “free” bags.

Opponents of removing plastic bags claim that stores and consumers should be left to decide what types of bags to offer and use. Unfortunately, voluntary efforts aimed at simply reducing plastic bag consumption have not yielded the results necessary to prevent disposable bags’ impact on the environment and wildlife.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Phase-Out, and Ban, Single-Use Plastic Bags

Connecticut should phase-in a ban on single-use plastic bags. Incentives to choose reusable instead of plastic disposable shopping bags can be an intermediate step prior to ending use of such bags altogether. In 2010, Washington, D.C. introduced a small fee on plastic shopping bags used in stores and saw an 86% reduction in consumption after just a few months.

Connecticut could establish a similar fee for each disposable, plastic shopping bag.

Educate Consumers

Eliminating disposable shopping bags from retail stores will not solve the entire problem. Educational programs must be coupled with incentives so that consumers understand the fees and become more aware of their recycling habits in the rest of their daily activities. Connecticut should ensure that funding from the fees on disposable shopping bags support educational efforts by retail stores and industry groups.

In 2015, the General Assembly is considering legislation that will gradually phase out plastic bags from retail stores in Connecticut, beginning by first establishing a fee on single-use bags that will fund employee and customer education on the program.

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