

State Water Plan Policy Subcommittee
January 12, 2016
1:00, Conference Room 6C
CT DEEP, 79 Elm St., Hartford
Draft Summary

Attendees: Bob Moore, Betsey Wingfield, David Sutherland, Maureen Westbrook, Beth Barton, Alicea Charamut, Martha Smith, Virginia de Lima, Matt Pafford, Margaret Miner, Michael O'Neill, Denise Ruzicka, Corinne Fitting, George Logan, Rebecca French, Joan Nichols, David Radka, Robert Young, Tom Callahan, Brian Thompson

On the phone: John Hudak, Larry Bingaman, Elin Katz

Approved Revised November 30, 2015 meeting summary.

Agreed that Matt Pafford will arrange a presentation at our next meeting by the Connecticut State Data Center.

Next meeting will be February 9, 2016 from 1 to 3 at DEEP.

Agreed that the group will meet monthly and establish a standing meeting. Betsey Wingfield will send out a Doodle Poll to find the best day of the month for members.

Mike O'Neil and Joan Nichols discussed agricultural water use. UCONN has been funded by USDA to determine agricultural water use in the state. The data will be collected by sectors and source and will be aggregated geographically to keep individual users anonymous. They anticipate having the data available by the end of 2016. Clear goal is to work with producers to gain efficiencies and have them better prepared to respond to drought. Early indications is that the green house industry is leading the curve on efficiency. They also raised that the impact of the Food Safety Modernization Act on vegetable and food growers will be to move growers to groundwater or potable water sources because the regulatory requirements to utilize surface water will be too great for small growers.

Some other topics related to agriculture that were discussed include:

- 1) Vegetable and fruit growers are most drought sensitive.
- 2) Potential for aligning quality with use depends in great part on the delivery methods for the water.
- 3) Water companies do not know what percentage of their water is used for agricultural as users are included within undifferentiated commercial accounts.
- 4) Utilizing public water for growing crops can be very expensive and out of reach of most small growers.

When asked about what policies should be considered in the state water plan related to agriculture, it was suggested that the plan support farming as a sustainable activity in Connecticut and encourage development of storage to cushion against shortages. Mike and Joan agreed to draft a policy around this for the subcommittee to consider.

Rebecca French from the Connecticut Institute for Resiliency and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) gave a power point presentation, a copy of which is attached. She noted that past data is not always a good predictor of the future, particularly with respect to sea level rise and a few other climate responses. It is therefore important to record how and why recommendations are made and build in flexibility so that recommendation can be modified as new data becomes available. The key is to have good data, evaluated over the full range of data, and to determine how much risk you want to tolerate and how much uncertainty you are willing to accept. The plan should have flexibility in how to respond to changing conditions.

It was agreed that the topics for the next meeting will include: 1) data center presentation, 2) discussion of drought response authority, and 3) cross walk handout on water quality and water quantity.