



**Testimony of Connecticut Fund for the Environment  
Before the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development**

*In support of the* Draft 2013-2018 Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut

Submitted by  
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*Connecticut Fund for the Environment works to protect and improve the land, air and water of Connecticut. We use legal and scientific expertise and bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.*

Dear Senator Cassano, Representative Rojas, and members of the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development,

Connecticut Fund for the Environment submits this testimony in support of the Draft 2013-2018 Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut (hereinafter "the State Plan" or "the Draft Plan"). The State Plan serves an essential function in state planning and provides guidance on development consistent with principles to conserve our state land and natural resources.

The State Plan serves as official state Executive Branch policy on matters involving land and water resources conservation and development. Recognizing the importance of having a comprehensive development strategy for the state, the Plan establishes six essential principles for development projects to follow, including: (1) revitalizing regional centers; (2) expanding housing opportunities to accommodate various household needs; (3) concentrating development along major transportation corridors; (4) conserving and restoring the natural environment; (5) protecting the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health; and (6) promoting integrated planning across all levels of government. It is critically important for our state's quality of life and economy to promote smart growth and Transit Oriented Development while preserving our natural resources.

The Plan and its Locational Guide Map are critically important in guiding state agency actions. The Plan principles and performance indicators promote both conservation and appropriate development in state agency plans to develop an attractive and dynamic state with robust economic cities and pristine shorelines and rural areas. Without the Map, however, such principles have no meaning or import. We encourage the Committee and the agency to make the map as detailed as possible, so that priority development areas truly reflect those that should

receive funding and conservation areas truly reflect those with valuable resources, such as open space and drinking water watersheds that should be preserved.

The Draft Plan omits the 2005-2010 State Plan much of the detailed protections afforded drinking water watersheds, including the requirement that lot sizes in a water supply watershed be a minimum of one dwelling unit per two acres of buildable area. This density maximum is an important and measurable guideline supported by sound science and established principles of watershed management. The state Department of Public Health has regularly emphasized this density guideline in watershed lands. Higher-density development in watershed lands increases the risk of water quality degradation because intensive development attracts certain features, like sewer systems, that can cause harmful and irreversible effects on drinking water quality. Additionally, the Connecticut Appellate Court recognized the importance of this density maximum in watershed lands in the context of a Section 8-30(g) affordable housing proposal. *Eureka V., LLC v. Ridgefield P & Z Commission et al.*, 139 Conn. App. 256; 57 A.3d 372 (2012).

Rather than include this density maximum, the Draft Plan instead requires minimizing “the impacts of development on drinking water sources by utilizing development forms and densities that limit impervious surface coverage to 10% of the overall area to be developed and which preserves the most amount of land in a natural or undisturbed state.” Draft Plan, 24. We do not believe there has been enough study to replace the traditional watershed protections with a single 10% impervious surface metric. It is our understanding that this metric was developed by DEEP for general water protection, not drinking water protection. Drinking water has always been subject to, and should continue to receive, heightened protections.

We are happy to work with OPM and the Committee in arriving at a solution. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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