



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COUNCIL ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
24 Ingham Hill Road ~ Essex, Connecticut 06426 ~ 860.767.9594 (Phone/Fax) ~ ct.cswc@att.net

**Maintaining Funding for
Conservations Districts, Council on Soil and Water
and Environmental Review Teams
(revised) March 1, 2010**

We respectfully ask you to maintain full funding to support the technical assistance available to municipal land use agencies, agricultural producers and every taxpayer in the State, provided by Conservation Districts, the Council on Soil and Water (Council), and Environmental Review Teams (ERT).

THE PROBLEM/ Governor's Bill 5018, AA Making Adjustments to State Expenditures and Revenues for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2011 proposes to cut by half funding to CT Conservation Districts, Council and ERT

The legislature's original intent in funding Districts, Council and ERT was to streamline technical land-use assistance directly to municipalities, among other benefactors. ***Cutting funding to these entities would result in significant reduction in natural resource technical assistance available to municipalities and taxpayers and be a step backward*** in the state's efforts to implement smart growth through municipal cooperation within regions and watersheds.

THE SOLUTION/ Do Not Cut Municipal Land Use Agency's and Agricultural Producer's Technical Assistance Funding

This is NOT a request for more dollars. We are only asking to keep the Conservation Districts, Council and ERT whole through budget negotiations, in-turn keeping whole the programs that they provide to and for municipalities, the agriculture community and each and every taxpayer.
Thank you!

** ** * * * * *

More information about programs of the Conservation Districts, Council and ERT is on following page.

Contacts:

Council/ Suellen Kozey McCuin, Executive Director/ 860-767-9594
Jeff Folger, Chairman of Legislation/Council, Chair/North Central Conservation District/ 860-644-2511 x 229
Districts/ David Askew, District Manager/North Central Conservation District/ 860-875-3881 x2
Tom ODell, Co-Chairman of Legislation/Council, Chair/CT River Coastal Conservation District/ 860-399-1807
ERT/ Elaine Sych, Coordinator/ERT 860-345-3977 John Guskowski, Co-Chairman ERT/ 860-928-7846

Below is a brief overview of Conservation District's, Council and ERT Programs and their funding.

Connecticut's Conservation Districts provide unbiased technical and environmental consulting services to a range of clients including municipalities, agriculture producers and private landowners.

- Districts serve municipalities by providing expert opinion, technical review, and inspection services for complex development projects. Districts also provide municipal staffing services in a number of towns by providing trained personnel to serve as wetland agent(s).

The Council on Soil and Water Conservation is dedicated to providing a statewide, regionally based, conservation and protection program for the land and water resources of the State of Connecticut.

- The Council coordinates District programs with activities of the Department of Environmental Protection and other state, regional, municipal and local agencies.

The Connecticut Environmental Review Teams are a group of environmental professionals drawn together to form multidisciplinary environmental study teams to assist all 169 municipalities in reviewing sites proposed for development or preservation; they consist of a partnership of federal, state, regional and local agencies.

- The ERT provides a unique **free service** of supplying objective, technical reports to local land use decision makers that strengthens support for community decisions, increases awareness of natural resources and provides information not readily available in a timely and cost effective manner.

Funding these entities was created by the legislature to support the services provided by Conservation Districts, Council and ERT as it recognized their value and the need for an adequate and viable funding source and the land use assistance provided to the municipalities and other taxpayers. The services provided by Conservation Districts and ERT offer a form of specialized regional assistance, not otherwise available to our municipalities and taxpayers.

The line item designated for these entities are supported by a \$60 land use fee collected by the towns and provided to the State on any and all land use applications.

Presently seven natural resource positions for assisting communities on a regional/statewide watershed basis are funded by this line item. These include five technical natural resource specialists, one in each of the five Conservation Districts, one Coordinator and an assistant for the ERT and an Executive Director for the Council on Soil and Water who coordinates statewide work and land use programs of the Conservation Districts with state and federal agencies.