

# Council on Environmental Quality

## *At a Glance*

**BARBARA C. WAGNER, Chairman**

**Karl J. Wagener, Executive Director**

*Established - 1971*

*Statutory authority – CGS Sec. 22a-11*

*Central office - 79 Elm Street,*

**Hartford, CT 06106**

*Number of employees – Two*

*Recurring operating expenses – \$152, 617*

*Organizational structure – Nine-member appointed council*

## **Mission**

*The Council on Environmental Quality's three main functions are to prepare and submit to the Governor the state's official annual report on the status of Connecticut's environment, to review projects of state agencies, and to receive and investigate citizen complaints. It also has specific responsibilities under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act, or CEPA (Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 22a-1 through 22a-1h and other statutes). The Council is within the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for administrative purposes only. Members of the nine-person Council are appointed by the Governor (5), Speaker of the House (2) and President Pro Tempore of the Senate (2). Members serve without compensation.*

## **Public Service / Improvements / Achievements 2010-2011**

The Council submitted *Environmental Quality in Connecticut*, the official annual report on the condition of the state's environment, to Governor Dannel P. Malloy in April 2011. To help the public make sense of potentially confusing and conflicting technical data on environmental trends, the Council continued its use of straightforward environmental indicators that clearly chart the state's progress. The report also assessed the overall effect of these environmental trends, and highlighted the natural resources that require more attention from state government. This year's report marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council's creation.

All reports are published on the Council's website. In 2009, the Council completed the transition from printed documents to web-only reports. By encouraging people to read the reports

online, the Council has been able to eliminate printing and thereby conserve money and resources. The Council's total expenditures in FY 2011 were 10 percent lower than in FY 2008. Citizens can receive e-mail notices of all new publications, as well as public meetings, by signing up for free e-alerts through the website.

Twice each month the Council publishes the *Environmental Monitor*, an online publication that replaced the Connecticut Law Journal as the official publication for CEPA notices. All state agencies post their required environmental notices on the *Monitor* website. The *Monitor* is distributed to all municipal clerks as well as any citizen who subscribes to e-alerts through the website. This electronic publication saves considerable sums by eliminating printing and mailing costs. In 2008, agencies began to post notices in the *Monitor* of proposed transfers of state property as required by Public Act 07-213; in FY 2011, agencies posted notices of 12 newly proposed land transfers as well as comments from the public and other agencies and notices of final disposition of lands. In December 2010, comments received from the public led directly to the preservation of state-owned land in Norwich that had been slated for sale and probable development; this was an extremely cost-effective means of open space conservation.

The public is welcome to attend the Council's monthly meetings, and citizens are encouraged to report complaints or concerns about Connecticut's environment at any time. The Council regularly holds meetings and public forums in various regions of the state and invites the public to speak. In November 2010, the Council held such a forum at the Legislative Office Building that focused on potential recommendations to the legislature. Throughout the year, individual citizens, municipalities, and organizations contacted the Council about possible violations and other concerns, and the Council investigated and helped to resolve cases involving groundwater contamination, construction of telecommunications towers in scenic areas, awarding of state grants for projects that were not subject to environmental impact evaluations, unpermitted water diversions on state lands, pesticide spraying on state lands, disposition of surplus state properties, and many others.

The Council also undertakes special projects, often resulting in special reports or detailed memos, which are posted on its website. In July 2010, the Council delivered detailed letters to Governor M. Jodi Rell and the Commissioners of Environmental Protection and Public Health that analyzed chronic problems in implementing permanent solutions for communities with contaminated wells, of which Tylerville in Haddam is an example.

### **Information Reported as Required by State Statute**

The Council is required to submit the annual report to the Governor on the status of Connecticut's environment, with recommendations for changes to state environmental laws and programs. This report and special reports are available on the Council's website ([www.ct.gov/ceq](http://www.ct.gov/ceq)). The Council sends the *Environmental Monitor* twice monthly to all municipal clerks, as required by CEPA.