

Representative Policy Board  
**Land Use Committee**  
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District  
90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut

Or

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## **AGENDA**

### **Regular Meeting of Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.**

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – January 8, 2025 meeting
3. Invasive Bugs Update: Claire Rutledge – CT Agricultural Experiment Station
4. Updates on land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other land items
6. Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
7. Adjourn

**\*\*Members of the public may attend the meeting in person or via remote access using instructions at the top of the agenda. To view meeting documents, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/3antbz44>. For questions, contact the board office at 203-401-2515 or by email to [jslubowski@rwater.com](mailto:jslubowski@rwater.com)**

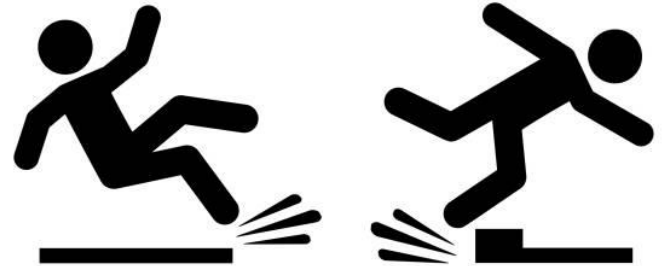
# SAFETY MOMENT

## PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

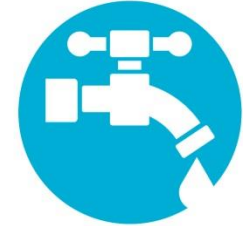
It's probably happened to most of us. That momentary lapse of attention, thinking about a personal problem or distraction by an activity that ends in a slip, trip or fall. A stumble down a stairway. A trip over an uneven surface. Slipping on the ice. It can lead to a variety of regrettable events ranging from a simple bruised shin to an extremely serious injury. It's just one of a number of conditions and situations that set the stage for slips, trips and falls in the workplace or at home.

**Here are six guidelines to help you create a safer environment for you, your employees, and at home.**

1. Create Good Housekeeping Practices
2. Reduce Wet or Slippery Surfaces
3. Avoid Creating Obstacles in Aisles and Walkways
4. Create and Maintain Proper Lighting
5. Wear Proper Shoes
6. Control Individual Behavior



**Tap Into  
Safety**



Regional Water Authority

Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

Safety is a core company value at the Regional Water Authority .  
It is our goal to reduce workplace injuries to zero.

 Regional Water Authority

Representative Policy Board  
**Land Use Committee**  
 South Central Connecticut Regional Water District  
 January 8, 2025

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Land Use Committee (“Committee”) of the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”), of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District (“RWA”), took place on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, 90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut and via remote access.

**Committee Members Present:** M. Levine(R), P. Betkoski(R), P. DeSantis(R), B. Eitzer(R), M. Horbal(R), G. Malloy, J. Oslander, and J. Mowat Young

**RPB:** R. Harvey(R), C. Havrda(R), N. Campbell

**Authority:** D. Borowy(R) and M. Ricozzi

**Management:** S. Lakshminarayanan, V. Benni(R), J. Hill(R), J. Triana, and N. Smith

Chair Levine called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Ms. Young and seconded by Mr. Malloy, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of its December 11, 2024 meeting, as presented.

Ms. Smith, the RWA’s Natural Resources Analyst, provided an update on the 2024 Deer Hunt, which included:

- Historical review
- Deer density and reduction
- 2024 Season overview
- Permits and Harvest totals by area
- Volunteer program
- Future considerations and suggestions

She reported that the deadline for the deer hunt survey is January 31<sup>st</sup>. An update will be provided to the Committee once the information is available.

At 5:58 p.m., Ms. Smith withdrew from the meeting.

Update on *The Land We Need for the Water We Use Program* – Mr. Triana, the RWA’s Real Estate Manager, reported:

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
December 31	75%	94%	72%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
December 2024	5.15	9.49	4.15
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 –	25.69	37.87	27.19

Land We Need for the Water We Use Program (Dispositions/Acquisitions)

- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 24+/- acres.
- Guilford - Corresponded with property owner of 3+/- acres.
- Seymour, 56 Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Booked town hall for the public hearing. Public notice published in newspapers.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties – Started marking new boundary lines. Neighbor asked about land available inside the curve of the roads (NB 4A).

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Town indicated that the application was not received in time for their Dec. meeting. Will be on the Jan. agenda.
- Woodbridge, 1029 Johnson Rd. – Prospective buyer of property emailed to ask more questions about the septic system.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 75% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – The harvest was halted in early June, and the logger pulled his equipment off the property on June 13th. It is uncertain at this point whether the buyer will continue with the salvage operation even if a market is found - 15% complete.
- Guilford - Menunketuc High-Grade Rehabilitation Cut and Conifer Release (GU 12/12A) – 55% complete.
  - Repaired gate at Madison slash wall.
  - Conducted field and administrative activities for the firewood, maple tapping program, and Christmas tree field.
  - Submitted an update on website (ForMap) for the US Forest Service LSR grant.
  - Inspected Menunketuc timber harvest at least weekly.
  - Cleared the Dudley Pond overflow pipe of sticks and mud from beaver activity.

Recreation

- Bird walk at Prospect had 10 participants.
- Responded to question about access to Big Gulph area from a neighbor.
- Cleared trails at Maltby Lakes.
- Replaced malfunctioning lock at Lake Chamberlain.
- One staff member indicated he would not return for the 2025 season and two others have medical issues that will limit their availability.

	December		November	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Permit Holders	4,787	4,742	4,838	4,730

Special Activity Permits

- A. DiCesare Associates (Clay Carlson)—perform a routine and underwater inspection of the Lake Whitney Bridge, contracted by CTDOT to perform the inspection; (12/12/2024).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –

- West Haven, Shingle Hill Tanks (WH 7) – Yale’s contractor started work at the tanks.
  - West Haven tank sites (WH 3 and WH 7) – Met with town staff about creating new agreement for police, fire, EMS, and DPW use of antennas at Burwell and Shingle Hill tank sites. Said we would reinstitute an annual fee.
  - Seymour, Clinton Rd. (SE 7) – Corresponded with town staff and supplied them copies of the agreements for equipment at Seymour Wellfield and Clinton Rd. building.
  - East Haven, Barberry Rd. fields (EH 9, 10, 11, & 13) – Responded to tenant renting the fields about drainage at the site.
  - North Branford, Great Hill Rd. fields (NB 4) - Responded to tenant renting the fields about invasive plant management.
  - New Haven, Whalley Ave. PRV (NH 5) – Responded to inquiry from abutter about additional use of the property.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford. Contractor cleared about 2 acres of barberry at Lake Gaillard in coordination with new maple sugar permittee.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	10 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	4.2 acres

- Deer hunt – Post-hunt surveys have been received. The deadline for returning them is January 31.
- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – Application was uploaded to DEEP website with supporting documents. Notices sent out to town and abutters.
- New Haven, Sachem St. easement – Contacted Yale staff again in order to get easement for a portion of the street that was discontinued and is now owned by the university.
- North Haven, 60 Middletown Ave. easement – Asked by Contracts staff about property owner requesting release of easement for one of our abandoned water mains.
- Corresponded with Farmland Trust staff about acres we protect around Lake Chamberlain.
- West Haven, Maltby Lakes outflow – Corresponded with downstream neighbor on Winfred St. about high water levels. Let him know it was just recent rainfall and not any activity from us.
- Hamden, 205 Skiff St. – Responded to inquiries about our lease with ACES at the property that was sold to the school in the 1980’s.
- Lake Whitney Dam project, East Rock Park – NRA continued conducting a tree inventory inside the park where we will need access to the dam.
- Flood ALERT/Raw water – New bathymetric surveys of the West River lakes were reviewed and questions sent to the consultant. Consultant replied. Expect to update the surface water storage sheet for the new year with these figures.
- North Branford, UI watermain easement – Corresponded with town staff about getting an easement through their property. Supplied a boiler-plate easement for them to review.
- Cheshire, Oak Dr. – Researched question from Contracts staff about location of Oak Dr. which does not appear on current maps, but we have an easement near. Determined that the current Poplar Dr. is the old Oak Dr.

Representative Policy Board  
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- Drone flights – Conducted two flights at Prospect to document pre- and post-mowing. Conducted drone flight at Ford St. tank for Engineering. Inspected all the hatches on top of the tank to determine if people needed to make closer inspections. Met with stakeholders from MDC to discuss our drone program and demonstrate our drone’s capabilities in forestry and inspection work.

Committee members discussed special topics for upcoming meetings.

The committee reviewed volunteer assignments for the upcoming Regional Water Authority meeting on January 23, 2025.

The next regular meeting is on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

At 6:15 p.m., the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

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Mark Levine, Chair

(R) = Attended remotely.

UNAPPROVED

**February 12, 2025  
Land Use Committee Meeting**

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
January 31	76%	98%	77%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
January 2025	0.72	5.95	3.57
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 – 1/31/25)	26.41	43.82	30.76

Land We Need for the Water We Use Program (Dispositions/Acquisitions)

- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 24+/- acres.
- Cheshire, Bis property – Corresponded with DEEP staff about the status of the OSWLA grant.
- Seymour, 56 Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Attended the public hearing at Seymour Town Hall and presented the disposition application. Updated town staff about the progress.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – ZBA approved all the variances that we submitted. P&Z resubdivision application goes before P&Z in February.
- Woodbridge, 2040 Litchfield Tpk. – Owner was given permission to replace the chimney in the kitchen, but must look substantially like the original.

Forestry Update

- Located some of the West River plot growth plot centers near Lake Chamberlain.
- Met with the Guilford Town Engineer to talk about our improvements to Goat Lot Rd.
- Responded to a survey from the National Agricultural Statistics Service for USDA’s 2024 Census regarding Horticultural Specialties.
- Researched and responded to a survey from the National Agricultural Statistics Service on beekeeping and honey production.
- Investigated a stolen firewood complaint from a RWA woodcutter in Bethany.

Recreation

- New Year’s Day walk had 26 participants.
- Winter tree walk had 29 participants.
- Submitted the annual Recreation Report to DPH as required for our permits.
- DPH issued a recreation activity permit for a hiking trail along the Mill River between Dixwell Ave. and South New Rd.
- Cleared trails at Lake Chamberlain.
- Contacted summer camps about summer events.

	January		December	
	2025	2024	2024	2023
Permit Holders	4,775	4,743	4,787	4,742

Special Activity Permits

- Yale University, School of the Environment (Mark S. Ashton) - Education/field trips for grad students, North end of Lake Gaillard along Crooked Brook Feb. 7; Off Route 79 in North Madison Feb. 28; Silvicultural stand delineation exercise; natural regeneration methods; (2/7/25 & 2/28/25).
- US Forest Service (Bryan M. Tirrell, Forester) – research 391 Totoket Road N. Branford, forest inventory study plot (5/1/2025 – 9/30/2025)
- Hamden Fire Department (Lieutenant Doug O'Rourke) – ice water rescue training, Lake Whitney Old Hartford Turnpike Entrance on 1/24/2025 and Clark's Pond on 1/28/2025 (1/24/2025 and 1/28/2025)
- Yale University School of the Environment- (Dr. Craig R. Brodersen) - Field trips in field botany and forestry. - North Madison Cedar Swamp off of Rt. 80, (1/30/2025-6/30/2025)
- UConn, Dept of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (Dr. Mark Urban) – Research on pond amphibians - Totoket mountain in Northford; ridge north of Lake Gaillard; 60 ponds distributed to the west and east of Big Gulph Brook (3/1/2025- 3/1/2026)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
  - Hamden, Downs Rd. field (HA 36) – Corresponded with tenant about allowing bee hives within her licensed area.
  - Woodbridge, Sperry Rd. (WO 5) – Contacted licensee about maintaining the field.
  - Seymour, Clinton Rd. (SE 7) – Town issued letter requesting renewal (5 years) of the agreement for radio equipment at the site.
  - Guilford, Saw Mill Hill Rd. (GU 12) – Contacted licensee about parking a car over the property line.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford and Guilford. Met with All Habitat staff to discuss options to treat autumn olive in the field.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	6.5 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	0 acres

- Deer hunt - 160 surveys were returned. The table below summarizes hunter effort.

Properties	Surveys Returned	Total Hunting Days	Total Hunting Hours
North Branford- Gaillard	108 out of 135	732.5	3942.0
Bethany	25 out of 25	63.0	387.7
Prospect	19 out of 20	185.0	807.0
Ansonia/Seymour	8 out of 8	33.0	208.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1,013.5</b>	<b>5,345.2</b>

- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – DEEP staff noted several people contacted them to oppose the project.
- North Haven, 60 Middletown Ave. easement – Reviewed drafts of termination of easement. Executed the document and sent to property owner for recording.
- Hamden, 205 Skiff St. – Met with ACES staff and potential buyer about the lease to the school at this property. Said we would look at their question about whether or not the lease is assignable.
- Madison, Durham Rd. cell tower generator (MA 2D) – DPH issued the change of use permit for the diesel generator.
- Milford, Beaver Brook system parcels – Responded to inquiry from attorney about the deed restrictions for some of the parcels sold to Subway.



- Watermain easement encroachments – Sent draft easement agreement to Murtha to review before contacting owners of properties where we have watermain easements.
- Flood ALERT/Raw water – Met to discuss the new storage figures for the West River lakes. Updated the spreadsheet thereafter.
- Lake Whitney Dam project, East Rock Park – NRA concluded the tree inventory inside East Rock Park.
- Land Use Plan – Sent out meeting invitation to several departments about the start of our latest update of the LUP.
- Bren Leard and Juliette Doyle completed their seasonal employment with us through the LSR grant funds.
- Boundaries – Checked and remarked boundaries in North Branford and Madison.

#### Attachments

- January 6, 2025 - Killingworth Land Trust buys 14 acres of open space from CT Water in 'bargain' sale – Middletown Press
- January 16, 2025 - Could wildfires like those damaging L.A. happen in CT? – CT Public Radio
- January 17, 2025 - Connecticut Water purchases land in Tolland, Prospect for watershed protection – CT Insider
- January 23, 2025 - Opinion: A CT water problem we can't run away from – CT Post

#### Upcoming Agenda Items

March 2025 - ???

## **Killingworth Land Trust buys 14 acres of open space from CT Water in 'bargain' sale**

Middletown Press | By Cassandra Day | Jan. 6, 2025

The Killingworth Land Conservation Trust recently acquired 14 acres of land rich with wildlife no longer needed by a Clinton utility company for open space. [Read Article](#)

The parcel provides habitat for a number of species, according to Clinton-based Connecticut Water, such as ducks, woodpeckers, songbirds and a variety of fish.

It was no longer needed for water supply purposes, the utility said.

Recognizing the public benefits and environmental safeguards of the transfer, the trust raised one half of the appraised value, and the company donated the remaining half as part of a "bargain sale," it said.

The land, next to the Hammonasset River and across the street from the trust's Cranberry Hollow parcel will serve as a natural buffer along the water resource, the agency said.

The property will be open to general public to use for hiking or passive recreation, Killingworth Land Trust President Andy Annino said.

"However, the land is a very steep decline off Green Hill and Paper Mill roads and goes down to the Hammonasset river, which becomes flood plain where it gets very wet or swampy at different times of the year," he said.

The property protects the river and is contiguous with other pieces of property the trust owns, Annino said.

"The Madison Land trust owns the other side of the river, which is also great having both land trusts protecting and preserving and protecting the river edges," he said.

The Paper Mill site is a former gravel pit donated to the trust by the town of Killingworth in 2004 after former owners excavated gravel from the site. In 2001, surplus berries from the Pond Meadow Road bog were cast around the gravel pit, where a few cranberries had been found, and now they are thriving.

It is also near Madison Land Trust properties and other parcels owned by the Killingworth trust.

About 15 miles of the Hammonasset River flows through town on its 21-mile journey to Long Island Sound, according to the statement. Of those 15 miles, about 90 percent of it is protected.

An old mill used to sit on the Madison side of the river, with remnants of an old stone dam 20 feet long, six feet wide and 14 feet high on the Killingworth side, according to the Madison Land Trust.

Built around 1865, the mill produced straw board used for making boxes until its closure in 1890.

Connecticut Water recently completed the final transfer of six parcels, totaling more than 82 acres of land, including Naugatuck and Prospect, and the Bethany Land Trust.

The parcels, ranging in size from eight to 19 acres, are intended to provide for passive public recreation including hiking, running and birding depending on the location, the water utility said.

The Killingworth trust owns more than 100 parcels and 1,000 acres of land.

## Could wildfires like those damaging L.A. happen in CT?

Connecticut Public Radio | By John Henry Smith - January 16, 2025

As wildfires devastate parts of Los Angeles, environmental conservation officials in New England are responding to concerns that a similar catastrophe could happen in Connecticut.

"The forest makeup in California is different than here in Connecticut," said Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Deputy Commissioner Mason Trumble. "We tend to have much more humid conditions throughout the year, which helps some of our fire and dying wood to rot or decompose faster, rather than just building up over time." But while the state has not experienced anywhere close to the level of wildfire property damage and loss-of-life seen in California, Connecticut is the 14th most forested state in the country and has had significant wildfire activity.

At one point in the fall of 2024, Connecticut had 100 wildfires burning at one time. The worst of those was the Hawthorne Fire, which burned 127 acres and led to the death of a volunteer firefighter. "Here in Connecticut, last fall's dry conditions coupled with high winds underscored this vulnerability," Trumble said. "We do a couple things here in the state to prepare." Firefighters are ready, but more needed. One thing DEEP does to prepare for wildfires is to maintain a well-trained force to fight them.

"We have forest firefighters here in Connecticut, highly trained, five on staff at DEEP," Trumble said. "We also train the Connecticut Interstate Fire Crew, an on-call volunteer crew made up of DEEP staff and members of the public. Anyone can apply." These teams not only assist in battling local fires, according to Trumble, but they are also key in responding to fires across the country. "We've offered a crew to California," Mason said. "We hope to send a crew out later if that offer is accepted." But, Trumble said he was worried about the future of Connecticut's firefighting crews. "What we're seeing across the state is just less willingness to participate in a volunteer firefighting role..and less training," Trumble said.

This year, the state had to call in crews from Quebec and from western states to bolster local capacity fighting the Hawthorne Fire. Trumble said recruiting and training the next generation of firefighters is a priority as Connecticut plans for the future.

### Proactive measures

The department also executes protective measures, like active forest management, on state lands to mitigate fire risk. "We do harvest trees. We do prescribed burns," Trumble noted. These measures help reduce the underbrush that can fuel wildfires. The state also maintains a network of forest service roads, which Trumble described as "fire breaks" that enable firefighters to access remote areas quickly during a blaze.

### What private landowners should do

While the state manages its lands proactively, Trumble emphasized the importance of private landowners taking responsibility for fire prevention on their properties. "If you are a private landowner and you're concerned about fire, you need to take a hard look at managing the brush around your structures and the bushes, even if that means rethinking your landscaping," he said. The presence of shrubs and bushes - common in New England landscaping - can pose significant fire risks.

### A lesson from "The Three Little Pigs"?

In the children's fable "The Three Little Pigs" a wolf blew down the wood and straw houses of two of the pigs, but had no luck destroying the brick constructed home of the third pig. Something similar has played out in the L.A. wildfires where a number of structures constructed of more concrete and steel have survived the fires. There are experts who agree that this type of construction, along with shrub management, could make a structure more fire resistant. But Trumble said he would stop short of endorsing any sort of government edict to mandate that property owners fortify the fire resistance of current homes in New England. "Old houses are part of the New England landscape," he said. "The best, most proactive step is managing the vegetation on your property, making sure you do have those buffers around your home."

### The Human Factor

Trumble said we human beings are both the cause of most wildfires and the greatest potential guardians against those fires. "If you're camping or just having a backyard fire, practice those good fire safety tips that you heard as a kid," Trumble advised. "Make sure your fire is completely out. Double drench it. Make sure you have lots of water on hand."

He says avoid leaving things like cigarettes or motorized lawn equipment near flammable materials. "All those types of things where you have a heat source—they can start fires," he said.

## **Connecticut Water purchases land in Tolland, Prospect for watershed protection**

By Jamila Young, CT Insider, January 17, 2025

TOLLAND — Connecticut Water Co. recently acquired about 60 acres of land as open space near the Shenipsit Lake Reservoir, an area known not only for providing residents with drinking water, but as a place for outdoor recreation.

The public water utility, regulated by the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, provides water service to more than 106,000 customers in 60 Connecticut towns and wastewater services to 3,000 customers in Southbury.

"The land in Tolland consisted of a few parcels at a total cost of about \$230,000," Connecticut Water President Craig Patla said, adding it was undeveloped land purchased from private owners.

Connecticut Water already owns hundreds of acres of land in the reservoir's watershed, which sends sources of drinking water such as rain or snowmelt into the reservoir.

In turn, the Shenipsit Lake Reservoir supplies water to the Rockville Drinking Water Treatment Facility on Snipsic Street in Vernon, which is the largest single source of drinking water for Connecticut Water customers in north-central Connecticut, with the capacity to produce up to 9 million gallons of drinking water a day.

The reservoir's watershed is also used to provide recreational activities such as year-round trail hiking and a fishing program that takes place from April to October. Boat storage slots are also available to residents of Ellington, Tolland and Vernon.

The activities are approved by the state Department of Public Health and are monitored daily so they don't negatively impact the water quality.

"A healthy watershed provides numerous benefits for the company, our customers and our communities," Patla said. "Water quality starts at the source. Preserving a natural buffer around water source safeguards against increased treatment costs related to any environmental changes due to development and benefits the community by protecting greenspaces."

Connecticut Water also purchased about 66 acres of land in Prospect near the Long Hill Reservoir, which supplies water to the William Stewart Drinking Water Treatment Facility in Naugatuck.

The facility serves about 10,000 customers and can produce about 6 million gallons of drinking water each day.

## Opinion: A CT water problem we can't run away from

By Craig J. Patla – CT Post - Jan 23, 2025

You've probably read at least something about PFAS in the news these last few years. PFAS, short for Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a class of manmade chemicals developed in the 1930s, that are now found, well, just about everywhere. They made possible nonstick cookware, stain-resistant upholstery, waterproof boots, grease-proof fast-food packaging, firefighting foam and more. The chemicals have become a part of the daily lives of people across the globe.

What made PFAS so useful is also what makes them problematic — they are virtually indestructible. As products touch our bodies, get buried in landfills, or burned in trash-to-energy plants, the PFAS components don't break down — they just move. As a result, we're finding PFAS in our soils, in our waterways, and in you and me. Scientists estimate that all living humans have some level of PFAS in their bodies.

Also troubling, health officials now identify these chemicals as carcinogenic. In response, leaders in public health and policy have a behemoth task on their hands: What can we do to limit the PFAS each of us are exposed to every day?

Here in Connecticut, state officials banned AFFF Firefighting Foam, and the use of PFAS-containing biosolid fertilizers to reduce the amount of PFAS that can leech into the ground and therefore the environment, our crops, and our water.

The federal government, through the Environmental Protection Agency, has also taken action. In 2024 the EPA announced new National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for the amount of certain PFAS compounds in drinking water served to customers from public water systems.

The regulations, which every public water system in the country will be required to meet by 2029, dictate the maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) of five identified PFAS chemicals. Two of the chemicals cannot be detected in drinking water at more than four parts per trillion (MCL of 4ppt). Three of the chemicals cannot be detected at more than ten parts per trillion (MCL of 10ppt)

What does that mean? Well, explaining that number is a challenge, but if you were to measure the distance from you to the sun (93 million miles!), the equivalent of four parts per trillion would measure 2 feet; in other words, incredibly small.

As drinking water providers, we take public health seriously. We're committed to meet these regulations. In fact, removing PFAS from drinking water not only will have public health benefits, but will provide the United States with a mechanism to destroy the PFAS collected through the water treatment process and remove them from the environment forever. (It involves "baking" the chemicals at very high heats.)

But it's no small job. Thousands — yes, thousands — of water sources across the country, and hundreds here in Connecticut, will require new treatment to meet the regulations. Water systems will need billions of dollars to construct and install the necessary equipment. Here at Connecticut Water, we will need to invest about \$200 million across the state.

In the United States, there are 152,000 public water systems, many of them small community systems, and we'll all need to invest to tackle this issue. Even with federal and state funding, costs will rise for water customers everywhere. Frankly, there is no choice. This is not something that can be covered by dipping into a rainy-day fund or using less copy paper.

We've been here as an industry before. The Surface Water Treatment Rule, enacted in 1989, requiring systems using water from lakes or reservoirs to filter and disinfect that water, spurred a huge investment in new treatment plants. Connecticut's regulated water utilities' customers funded these using a mechanism called CWIP — short for Construction Work In Progress. This mechanism meted out the large costs of construction into smaller chunks on customer bills, preventing the shock of a steep rate increase following the completion of the project.

The Connecticut Legislature is reviewing a similar proposal now to address PFAS; the Water Quality & Treatment Adjustment, which would allow regulated water utilities to smooth out the rate impacts of PFAS treatments over time in a similar way. It will allow the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to pre-approve projects, and provide customers a ramp rather than a steep step.

I ask our elected officials to support the Water Quality & Treatment Mechanism as the best way forward through a tough situation. The investment ahead of us is large, but provision of drinking water that all of us can trust every day is invaluable. In fact, we cannot live without it. Allow us to make the necessary investments to meet the EPA's regulation without causing rate shock for customers.

Craig J. Patla is the president of Connecticut Water.