



Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT *2018 Connecticut Legislative Priorities*

Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) is a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions to protect public health and the natural environment. CCE represents over 80,000 contributing members in Connecticut and New York. CCE's legislative priorities for 2018 include:

### **ENACTING A PERMANENT PROHIBITION ON FRACKING WASTE DISPOSAL**

In response to the growing evidence of adverse health and environmental impacts associated with fracking waste, the State of Connecticut passed commonsense legislation in 2014 (Public Act 14-200) enacting a three year moratorium on the storage, treatment and disposal of toxic fracking waste. This law requires the CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to promulgate regulations to ensure that hazardous fracking waste products do not adversely affect Connecticut's air, soil and water resources or public health, to be finalized no later than July 2018. Unfortunately, DEEP has indicated that they are ill equipped to meet those requirements and will likely miss the July 2018 deadline.

Since passage of PA 14-200, at least 33 Connecticut towns have passed local ordinances to protect the health of their communities by prohibiting the storage, treatment and disposal of this waste. Volumes of hazardous, potentially radioactive fracking waste continue to pose storage, treatment and disposal problems, and could create an unacceptable but avoidable risk to Connecticut's environment and public health, if the moratorium is lifted or allowed to sunset. *CCE strongly supports the passage of a permanent ban on the storage, treatment and disposal of hazardous fracking waste in Connecticut.*

### **UPDATING CONNECTICUT'S CONTAINER DEPOSIT LAW**

Connecticut's bottle deposit law (A.K.A. *the Bottle Bill*) is a convenient and proven effective way to keep our environment clean and free from glass and plastic waste that would otherwise litter our roadways, beaches, and open spaces. According to national recycling data, states with a bottle deposit have significantly higher recycling rates for carbonated beverage containers than states that do not. Michigan (the only state with a 10-cent refundable bottle deposit) has the highest redemption rates in the nation, with 95% of containers covered under the law being recycled on an annual basis.

Currently, Connecticut's bottle bill only covers carbonated beverage containers and plastic water bottles, which are rapidly becoming the most popular beverage category. Expanding Connecticut's existing bottle deposit law to include juices, teas, sports drinks and other non-carbonated beverages, Connecticut could increase container recycling by approximately 200 million units each year. Additionally, by increasing the handling fees paid to redemption centers for each container recycled, the CGA will provide much needed financial relief to our state's struggling redemption centers. **CCE supports expanding Connecticut's container deposit to include juices, teas, sports drinks, and other non-carbonated beverage containers, in addition to increasing the handling fees paid to redemption centers for each container category.**

## **SEWAGE OVERFLOW RIGHT-TO-KNOW**

The CGA passed legislation in 2012 to notify the public whenever raw or partially treated sewage are discharged into Connecticut's waterways, posing a potential public health hazard. While this law has helped to streamline and modernize DEEP's reporting system for sewer treatment plant (STP) discharges and combined-sewer and sanitary-sewer overflows (CSO's and SSO's), the program's web portal is difficult to navigate and offers little in the way of providing convenient, timely notification to the public, as sewage spills happen in their area. To further complicate and impede the public notification process, the program's electronic reporting component *is not mandatory for sewer plant operators*, and certain large sewer authorities have simply refused to participate.

In order to protect public health and preserve the ecological health of our state's waterways, the CGA should revisit Connecticut's "Sewage Right-to-Know" law, and require mandatory electronic reporting from each of the state's sewage treatment plant (STP) operators. Additionally, the CGA should require DEEP to provide timely notification to the public, whenever a STP discharge, CSO or SSO discharge is reported. This could be done cost effectively through a partnership with the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, utilizing the existing infrastructure of the CT Alert Emergency Notification System. **CCE strongly supports a mandatory electronic reporting requirement and timely public notification to alert Connecticut residents of sewage spills and STP discharges, as they happen.**

## **ENSURING PROPER ENFORCEMENT OF CONNECTICUT'S PESTICIDE REGULATIONS**

In December 2017, the CT Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) released a report indicating that inspections and enforcement around pesticide use in Connecticut have fallen more than 60% over the last 3 years, bringing enforcement to a 15 year low. The report details several key factors that have impeded the program's ability to monitor pesticide use across the state, analyze available data, and enforce State law when violations occur.

These statistics demonstrate that the enforcement actions taken by DEEP to prevent undue exposures and misuse of pesticides are insufficient to protect public health, highlighting a need for swift action by the legislature to ensure improved compliance and enforcement regarding the use of toxic pesticides in Connecticut. Concrete steps the CGA can take in 2018 include:

- 1. Establish a dedicated fund for revenues generated through pesticide registration fees, to be used to cover the costs of regulating pesticides, inspection and enforcement activities.**
- 2. Implement an electronic reporting and record keeping system for pesticide permits, certifications, and registrations; to improve the state's ability to access, analyze, and make data related to pesticide use available to the public.**
- 3. Reinstigate the environmental monitoring program to monitor and determine the amount of pesticides present in our soil and water resources, as well as wildlife.**
- 4. Close on-line purchasing loopholes, allowing uncertified persons to purchase restricted-use pesticides without proper certification required by law in Connecticut.**