

January 27, 2017

Lori Mathieu, Public Health Section Chief
CT Department of Public Health
Drinking Water Section
410 Capitol Avenue
MS#51-WAT
PO Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134

RE: Woodridge Lake Sewer District's Proposed Regional Sewer Connection Project

Dear Ms. Mathieu:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and additional information to the Department of Public Health regarding the Woodridge Lake Sewer District's ("WLSD") proposed regional sewer connection project ('proposed project'). We offer the following information in addition to what has been previously submitted (see attached letter dated November 18, 2016.)

The overall land and water area affected by the many components of this issue is complex. It is important to note that all involved watersheds are classified as Class AA watersheds, which need to be protected as water resources, and include the following:

- The Shepaug Reservoir's Class AA public water supply watershed, which is where the Woodridge Lake Sewer District (WLSD) is located.
- The Bantam River Class AA watershed, which is tributary to Bantam Lake, a major recreational waterbody and which currently contains the WLSD treatment plant. The existing facility is a subsurface ridge and furrow system that is failing and allowing pollution to enter the waters of the state. The Bantam River watershed also contains the Aquarion Aquifer Protection area associated with the Goshen wellfield.
- The Torrington Water Company's Allen Dam watershed area.

As you are aware, the project is located entirely within the state DOT roadway (paved area) as it passes through a short length of the Allen Dam subwatershed. No water company owned lands are being disturbed. We will summarize why we believe that this project does not present or cause pollution or threaten pollution of a public water supply source which is prejudicial to public health. The very minimal risk of this project is outweighed by solving an existing ongoing environmental pollution problem, which has undergone a thorough alternatives analysis including the federal NEPA process.

The WLSD existing failing system needs an immediate remedy after decades of discussion and analysis. The most appropriate way to address this community pollution problem is to redirect this flow to proper treatment with discharge to a class B waterbody. The City of Torrington Wastewater Facility which discharges into the Naugatuck River, a class B stream, is the appropriate receptor for this flow. Any proposed route from WLSD to the City of Torrington Wastewater Facility would pass through some or all of these Class AA watersheds. WLSD's proposed route offers the least disturbance with minimal impacts.

We would like to point out that CT State Route 4 is an existing DOT owned road that travels through a portion of the Torrington Water Company (TWC) watershed. According to the Connecticut Department of Transportation Traffic Count Data¹, the average daily count for vehicles ranges from 6,500 to 7,000 in the watershed along Route 4 (Goshen Road). At 6,500 vehicles per day, there are potentially 1,690,000 vehicles during the year on work days alone. Many of those vehicles will be trucks carrying gasoline, diesel and home heating oil, which pose a significant potential source of pollution to the Allen Dam subwatershed.

Whereas the risk of a force main leak associated with the small section of the proposed project crossing the Allen Brook subwatershed within CT Route 4 is minimal, Torrington Water Company has an emergency response plan in place to respond to any spills in the Allen Dam subwatershed and the WLSD is proposing protective controls and measures to decrease any potential for a spill. In addition, the September 20, 2016 Meeting Minutes from the City of Torrington Inland Wetlands Committee when reviewing this project states on page 6, "Ms. Malanca referred to TWC's Engineer's Report, from Tata and Howard, page 7 which says "A rough estimate of travel time to the Allen Reservoir dam based on textbook soil transmissivity values was made and found to be in the range of 6 months to a year based on generally published soil data for the area. It is therefore likely that leakage from the project would not be readily noticed in the Allen Reservoir." And on Page 7 of the same minutes "The Commission finds that there is no reasonable likelihood of adverse impact to the wetlands and watercourses from the regulated activities proposed."

WLSD's *Application for Inland Wetlands Permit for the City of Torrington* dated July 13, 2016, includes plans specifically showing that any NEW pipe will be completely within the existing DOT roadway. No watershed or water company lands will be impacted. The plans also show that approximately 3,400 feet of existing City of Torrington Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) sewer (including some within the watershed) that is outdated is being replaced. This will increase reliability of the pipe, appropriately size pipe for the existing flow including WLSD, and limit the risk for potential pollution; thereby increasing protection of the watershed.

This project was also designed with due consideration of potential impacts to the City of Torrington WPCA collection system. The alternate route (not preferred) increases the probability of odor issues and clogging due to the addition of the flows at a point requiring the sewerage to flow a longer meandering distance through the City of Torrington sewer system in undersized sewer pipe before getting to the Torrington wastewater treatment plant. Whereas the recommended route brings the sewerage as directly as possible into the soon to be upgraded Torrington wastewater treatment plant through appropriately sized and sloped pipe.

¹Traffic Monitoring Information Traffic Count data is located on the Department of Transportation's webpage at: <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=3532&q=330402>.

We respectfully ask that due consideration be given to the need to resolve an existing pollution problem in an effective and efficient manner.

To reiterate the important points previously made:

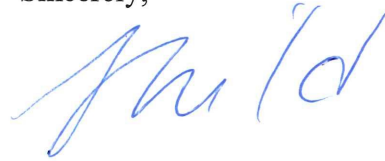
- The WLSD's existing treatment plant's ridge and furrow system is failing and allowing pollution to enter the waters of the State in a class AA watershed. This existing failing system needs an immediate remedy after decades of discussion and analysis.
- No growth is being introduced either in Goshen or Torrington.
- The maximum build out in Goshen is already planned for and no additional connections can be made along the force main in Torrington as required by the City of Torrington.
- No water company owned lands are being disturbed as the force main will be entirely within the existing DOT roadway.
- The chance of a leak is minimal, but WLSD has already stated they will include additional safety measures to provide redundancy at the most sensitive crossing closest to the Allen Dam.
- Existing sewer pipe within the Allen Dam subwatershed is being replaced with pipe that has tighter joints thereby decreasing the risk of a leak in the existing sewer main. This improvement as a result of the proposed project results in a reduction of risk and improved protection of the Torrington Water Company source.
- The chosen sewer main route to the City of Torrington wastewater treatment plant will avoid creating other potential public health issues such as overflows, clogging or odors within the existing City of Torrington sewer collection system. The preferred route has the wastewater from WLSD entering directly into a twelve inch interceptor sewer not available in the alternate route.
- The WLSD sewer line segment in question and the associated pump station will be operated by the City of Torrington WPCA which has extensive experience operating such systems and has a vested interest in protecting the water sources serving the City of Torrington.

Lastly, this sewer system is not different from those that currently exist in many other towns and watersheds across the state. Inter-municipal cooperation and regional solutions are increasingly needed to solve important water quality and water pollution problems which impact public health associated with human recreational use of Connecticut's lakes streams and rivers. Public drinking water surface watersheds are located in 93 municipalities in the state of Connecticut. Of the 214 public drinking water surface watersheds in Connecticut, 130 have sewer service area parcels within them. Thus, there is a wide spread distribution of municipal sewer systems within numerous drinking watersheds in Connecticut. The mere presence of sewer systems within drinking water watersheds has not been demonstrated to present or cause pollution or threaten pollution of a public water supply source which is prejudicial to public health.

In the unfortunate circumstance that your Department intends to determine otherwise, we respectfully request a high level interagency meeting be held prior to such determination so that the merits of the multi-faceted environmental and public health issues can be mutually understood by both agencies.

Please contact Denise Ruzicka of my staff if you need further information on any aspect of this letter at (860) 424-3853 or by email at denise.ruzicka@ct.gov.

Sincerely,



Betsey Wingfield
Bureau Chief
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse

cc: Johan Strandson, USDA-RD (via e-mail)
Ray Turri, President, WLSD (via e-mail)
Oswald Inglese, DEEP (via e-mail)

Attachments:

Letter dated December 22, 2016 from Lori Mathieu requesting DEEP comments
Letter dated November 18, 2016 from Betsey Wingfield to DPH

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor
Nancy Wyman
Lt. Governor

Drinking Water Section

December 22, 2016

Ms. Betsey Wingfield
Bureau Chief
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

RE: Woodridge Lake Sewer District's Proposed Regional Sewer Connection Project

Dear Ms. Wingfield:

This is in response to your November 18, 2016 letter regarding Woodridge Lake Sewer District's ("WLSD") proposed regional sewer connection project ("Proposed Project"). The Proposed Project would route a force sewer main directly through Torrington Water Company's ("TWC") Allen Dam Reservoir watershed area.

In written testimony submitted to both the Goshen Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Commission and the Torrington Inland Wetland Commission pursuant to *Conn. Gen. Stat. § 25-32f*, the Department of Public Health ("Department") raised concerns with the route of such Proposed Project and the potential impacts a failure of the force main would have on the Allen Dam Reservoir, which supplies water to 40,000 people in the Torrington area. In the Department's written testimony, it requested that WLSD consider alternative routes that would avoid a public drinking water supply watershed. WLSD did subsequently modify the Proposed Project by including additional protective measures in response to concerns raised by the Department. To date, however, WLSD has not changed the route of such Proposed Project.

As you know, pursuant to *Conn. Gen. Stat. § 25-34*,¹ the Department has instituted an investigation to determine whether WLSD's Proposed Project may cause the pollution or threatened pollution of a

¹ *Conn. Gen. Stat. § 25-34* states that: "(a) The Department of Public Health may, and upon complaint shall, investigate any system of water supply or source of water or ice supply from which water or ice used by the public is obtained, and, if it finds any pollution or threatened pollution which in its judgment is prejudicial to public health, it shall notify the owner or operator of such water company or system of ice supply, or the person or corporation causing or permitting such pollution or threatened pollution, and the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, of its findings and shall make such orders as it deems necessary to protect such water or ice supply and render such water or ice safe for domestic use. (b) A copy of any such order shall be mailed to such owner or operator or such person or corporation by certified mail, return receipt requested. Within thirty days of the date of mailing, the recipient of the order may request a hearing to show why the findings in the order are not based on



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Ms. Wingfield
December 22, 2016
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source of public drinking water supply. As part of its investigation, the Department is reaching out to people and entities that may have information relevant to the Department's investigation. If the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection ("DEEP"), or anyone else, has any information, please submit it to the Department.

If, after the investigation, the Department finds that WLSD's Proposed Project will cause the pollution or threatened pollution of a source of public drinking water supply that in the Department's judgment is prejudicial to public health, the Department may issue an order or orders in writing to WLSD that the Department deems necessary to protect the source of public drinking water supply and render such water safe for domestic use. If the Department issues an order or orders to WLSD, WLSD will have an opportunity to request a hearing to show why the findings in the order or orders are not based on substantial evidence or that the order or orders are an abuse of discretion.

Thank you for writing to the Department. We appreciate any and all additional information that you can share with us.

Sincerely,



Lori J. Mathieu
Public Health Section Chief
Drinking Water Section

Cc: Susan Suhanovsky, Torrington Water Company
Johan Strandson, USDA RD
Raymond Turri, Woodridge Lake Sewer District
Denise Ruzicka, Oswald Inglese, DEEP

substantial evidence or that the order is an abuse of discretion. Upon receipt of such request, the commissioner shall grant a hearing as soon thereafter as practicable or within ten business days if the order requires immediate compliance. The commissioner shall not grant any request for a hearing at any time thereafter. The order shall be effective on a date set by the commissioner, but the recipient of the order may request a stay of such order pending the decision of the commissioner. Any hearing shall be deemed to be a contested case and held in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54. The request for a hearing shall be a condition precedent to an appeal under the provisions of section 25-36."



November 18, 2016

Lori Mathieu, Public Health Section Chief
CT Department of Public Health
Drinking Water Section
410 Capitol Avenue
MS#51-WAT
PO Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134-0308

RE: Woodridge Lake Sewer District's Proposed Regional Sewer Connection Project

Dear Ms. Mathieu:

Inadequate treatment and dispersal of sewage from the residential community of Woodridge Lake has been a long standing threat to water quality in Connecticut. In 1989 the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection ("DEEP") entered into a consent order requiring, among other things, Woodridge Lake Sewer District ("WLSD") to investigate the hydraulic capacity of the ridge and furrow dispersal system. After a series of engineering reports that DEEP found inadequate, a comprehensive report in 1995 demonstrated to the DEEP that the WLSD infiltration site located off Brush Hill Road in Goshen was not a viable long term wastewater dispersal option for the treated wastewater from the community. The ridge and furrow dispersal site lacks sufficient hydraulic capacity for current and future peak wastewater flows. When the hydraulic capacity of the dispersal system is exceeded it creates overland flow and a point source discharge to surface waters of the West Branch Bantam River, which is classified as Class AA waters.

To address the above issue, WLSD hired Woodard and Curran to perform wastewater facilities planning. The report completed by Woodard & Curran concluded that the transmission of WLSD wastewater along Route 63 and Route 4 to Torrington's collection system for subsequent wastewater treatment and disposal is the most practical solution to the existing community pollution problem. DEEP concurred with this assessment.

What makes this community pollution problem unique is the size of the taxing district and its location. The community wastewater service area is located within the Shepaug Reservoir Class AA watershed. The current disposal system is located in an adjacent Class AA watershed (Class AA watersheds are existing or potential drinking water supply areas). There are no nearby subsurface treatment options available. In addition, the fiscal burden for any solution will be shouldered by less than 900 property owners. The chosen solution must not only be viable, but also economically practical for WLSD. The recommended route is the most cost-effective solution.

Since DEEP is not the funding agency, an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) is not required at the state level. This project is receiving 100% USDA – Rural Development funding. As a result, the environmental review is addressed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

In considering the potential environmental impacts of the proposed routes, DEEP offers the following information. The Highland Avenue Alternative was considered less viable due to where it would tie into the existing Torrington wastewater system, the extra cost to implement the system, the hardship to the town of Torrington to have those flows come into the sewer system in a less than desirable location, and the increased possibility of odor issues due to the topography. This route is completely outside the Allen Dam Reservoir Watershed however, it is within a Class AA watershed area and passes by several small public water systems.

The proposed Route 4 Alternative, and the Weed Road Alternative, both pose the same de minimis level of risk to the Allen Dam Reservoir Watershed. Disregarding all other factors, the Route 4 Alternative is a more direct route that traverses below the Allen Dam Reservoir through the Allen Dam Reservoir Watershed. It would connect to Torrington sewers already located in the Allen Dam Reservoir Watershed south of Crystal Lake. All proposed pipes in Torrington will be within existing roadway right-of-way of the CT Department of Transportation (DOT) and transferred to the City of Torrington Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) for operation and maintenance. This route has no direct impact to any wetland or water courses along the route within Torrington. The transmission system is specifically designed as a force main so that no changes in zoning nor any expansion of the existing sewer service areas can occur in either town.

The two pump stations utilized to convey the sewage along Route 63 and Route 4 will be situated in Goshen, outside of the Allen Dam Watershed. The force main will then traverse across the town line to Torrington and connect to an existing 24" interceptor. The force main will be double-walled and have transducers to detect leakage which can immediately stop the flow of sewage through the line. DEEP recognizes WSLD's efforts to make this pipe as tight as possible and concurs with having it in a road right-of-way rather than going cross-country.

DEEP has also reviewed the Torrington Water Company Water Supply Plan dated February 25, 2009. In the Plan it was noted that the Allen Dam Reservoir has a "low detention time and poor dilution capacity." The plan also noted that "there exist about 40 potentially contaminating properties on this watershed." The Water Supply Plan goes on to state that the Company operates the reservoir on an "infrequent basis" based on fire use, severe drought and rainfall occurrences. Further on in the plan, it states that the reservoir is considered an "emergency source" even though it is listed as an active source.

Based on the infrequent use of the reservoir and the minimal possibility of a sewer main break, it appears the potential threat to this reservoir is minimal. DEEP must also weigh other considerations, such as: ability to construct the project, cost impact both for construction and Operation and Maintenance, availability of funding and the preferences of the Torrington Water Pollution Control Authority for this particular route. This project is being funded through USDA Rural Development and also includes replacement of thousands of feet of existing old pipe in Torrington at NO COST to Torrington. It is also the most cost effective solution. Should that funding be lost, the project would revert to pursuing state funding at a higher cost to state tax payers. In addition, please keep in mind that were this project to be funded with state monies, WSLD would be obligated to construct the most cost-effective solution to remediate the existing

community pollution problem in accordance with the cost-effectiveness requirement of the federal Clean Water Act.

On balance, DEEP believes the high level of protection of the water sources along the route through pipe location and design and the commitment from both WLSD WPCA and the Torrington WPCA to work together for the best solution for both communities makes the Route 4 the best option. The City of Torrington has a vested interest to protect the water supply not just for the privately owned Torrington Water Company but for the citizens of Torrington. The route chosen provides the necessary balance to resolve a long standing community pollution problem and improve water quality while providing appropriate protection of watersheds. DEEP commends the Torrington WPCA for its inter-municipal cooperation that is essential for solving this on-going community pollution problem.

The proposed project results in advancements in water quality and presents a de minimis threat to the watershed. On balance this is a solution that meets ambient water goals while protecting public water supplies.

If you have any addition questions or need additional information, please contact Denise Ruzicka of my staff at (860) 424-3853 or by email at denise.ruzicka@ct.gov.

Sincerely,



Betsey Wingfield
Bureau Chief
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse

cc: Johan Strandson, USDA-RD (via e-mail)
Ray Turri, President, WLSD (via e-mail)
Oswald Inglese, DEEP (via e-mail)

