

**State of Connecticut**  
**Natural Heritage, Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board**

August 29, 2018

*Sent via email: governor.malloy@ct.gov*

Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
210 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy,

The undersigned members of the State of Connecticut Natural Heritage, Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board (“Review Board”) respectfully request that you convene the State Bond Commission to allocate **\$5 million in bonding for the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA)** managed by the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP).

One of the roles of the Review Board (as established in CGS Section 7-1313(b(2))) is to promote public participation in the state’s land conservation programs, and ensuring adequate funding for OSWA is essential to achieving this goal.

To date, the OSWA program – funded through bonding and Community Investment Act revenues -- has provided \$125 million to land trusts, towns, and water companies to assist in the conservation of 33,000+ acres of land in 137 CT municipalities. This has been the primary funding source dedicated to achieving the state goal of protecting 21% of Connecticut as open space by 2023.

Under your administration, the OSWA program has established a predictable schedule of annual grant rounds, enabling land trusts, municipalities, and water companies to strategically plan and effectively negotiate land conservation transactions. Demand for the grant program continues to be consistently strong from every corner of the state.

Restoring bonding for OSWA is particularly important now in response to recent diversions of Community Investment Act funds that disproportionately tapped funding that would have gone to DEEP. Of the \$5 million that was diverted (see P.A. 17-2, section 697), \$2.3 million was taken from DEEP. This disproportionate cut has disrupted DEEP’s ability to both cover pending OSWA grant awards and administrative costs. Replenishing the fund with available bonding is essential to the ongoing survival of the OSWA program and the ability of land trusts, towns, and water companies to continue to plan for and pursue high caliber conservation projects throughout the state.

Thank you in advance for your support of OSWA and other programs which are critical to land conservation efforts in Connecticut.

Sincerely,



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Eric Hammerling, Co-Chair



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Amy Blaymore Paterson, Co-Chair

Natural Heritage, Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board

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