

## Connecticut's Water Quality – Among the Best in the World

One of Connecticut's greatest resources is the quality and safety of our public water supplies. Connecticut's water companies are deeply committed to providing consumers with an ample supply of public water to meet their needs.

As the state Department of Public Health recently pointed out, "Connecticut's sources of public drinking water only use the highest quality and most protected waters in the state. Our state's pristine public drinking water sources are guarded by numerous laws intended to protect public health and to minimize any unreasonable risk to health."

Recently, articles in several newspapers have raised concerns associated with pharmaceuticals in the wastewater stream and their impact on water quality. At this time, there is no indication that trace levels of pharmaceuticals pose any health risk to humans. However, as stewards of the state's water resources, the water industry is paying very close attention to studies associated with the occurrence of pharmaceuticals in the environment and more specifically sources of public water supply.

Fortunately, Connecticut is in an excellent position to ensure the continued quality of its drinking water supplies. Connecticut is only one of two states in the nation that prohibits discharges from wastewater treatment plants within public water supply watersheds. This means that, unlike other states, Connecticut's public water supplies are at very little risk of exposure to pharmaceuticals that have been flushed through sewers and into the wastewater stream.

In addition, our public water supplies are tested frequently to meet state and federal requirements. Although water companies are not required to test for pharmaceuticals, companies do conduct water quality testing for more than 83 contaminants in the state's public drinking water sources. Also, the United States Environmental Protection Agency maintains an active program to identify contaminants in public drinking water that may warrant further study and potential regulation.

Water companies are also required to: 1) treat all surface waters used for public drinking water supply; 2) monitor the quality of these waters, and 3) publish water quality reports, which describe the quality of the water the company provides, that are distributed to the consumers.

Connecticut has also taken several key steps to further protect water supplies and watershed areas from contamination. These efforts include encouraging the preservation and protection of watershed lands as open space through incentive programs, such as the state's Open Space and Watershed Acquisition program, and requiring watershed inspections, maintaining emergency preparedness for hazardous spill responses, conducting review of new developments on

watershed areas, hosting household hazardous waste collections, and providing environmental education.

Considering these laws and regulations that place Connecticut's water quality among the best in the world, the water industry still is committed to supporting efforts to further protect the state's water supplies. We, therefore, support efforts to prohibit the disposal of medications by hospitals, nursing homes and other institutions to public or private waste water treatment facilities. We also urge consumers to properly dispose of unused prescription drugs, as outlined by the state Department of Consumer Protection in a recent bulletin.

Preserving and protecting water quality is an ongoing mission and one that our public water supply industry takes very seriously. We are committed to working with state and federal regulators, lawmakers, environmental and watershed organizations, and the public, to ensure that our consumers will continue to have access to an ample supply of high quality water for current and future water supply needs.

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