

October 3, 2023

Allyson Clarke, Property Agent  
Department of Energy & Environmental Protection  
Office of the Commissioner  
79 Elm Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Ms. Clarke,

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is pleased to review and provide comment on an application by the Town of Tolland to help fund the purchase of the Tolland Marsh through the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Open Space and Watershed Acquisition program.

Based on our review, preservation of this property is consistent with CRCOG's 2014-2024 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), which identifies this area as an environmentally sensitive area that warrants protection. Preservation of this 100-acre marsh and its surrounding land will enhance and preserve natural habitat, help protect water quality (a portion of the Skungamaug River flows through the property), support the region's resiliency during flood events, and provide the opportunity for residents of the region and beyond to enjoy the land's trails and scenic features. Additionally, the Tolland Marsh provides substantial ecological benefits to the region – as part of the Willimantic River watershed, protection of the marsh will enhance the region's resiliency to future flood events.

Preservation of this property helps the town advance its goal to develop a greenway and blueway trail system that connects Crandall Park to and through the marsh area, which supports CRCOG's POCD goals to expand access to recreational opportunities. As part of this long-term vision, Tolland also anticipates construction of an ADA-accessible platform to provide an opportunity to view the marsh for users of all ages and abilities. CRCOG supports such efforts that improve the ability of all of the region's residents to access natural areas.

We respectfully encourage you to support the Town of Tolland's application. Please do not hesitate to contact us at 860-522-2217 if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Hart  
Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments

Cc: Caitlin Palmer, Director of Regional Planning and Development, CRCOG  
Brian Foley, Town Manager, Town of Tolland  
Megan Massa, Projects/Grants Manager, Town of Tolland  
David Corcoran, Director of Planning and Development, Town of Tolland