January 2025

Interstate Environmental Commission

Working for Connecticut

About Us

The Interstate Environmental Commission (IEC) is a tri-state agency committed to protecting, conserving, and restoring Connecticut's environment, particularly in the area of water quality. One of IEC's most valuable resources is its independent, accredited environmental laboratory. IEC's laboratory primarily analyzes non-potable water samples collected throughout the tri-state area in conjunction with coordinated projects designed to support IEC's mission. The laboratory holds certification by the Connecticut Department of Public Health Environmental Laboratory Approval Program.

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How We Are Funded

According to the IEC's Tri-State Compact, each member state must appropriate funds to support the IEC. In the 2024 fiscal year, Connecticut contributed $3,333, or 0.2%, of IEC's total funding from its state fiscal year budget. While the majority of IEC's funding comes from federal grants, state appropriations are critical for IEC to meet the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 106 grant non-federal match requirement.

Education and Public Information

IEC participates in and welcomes opportunities to collaborate with educators, organizations, and the public to promote awareness of water quality issues and environmental stewardship. In 2024, IEC hosted its second annual open house, welcomed laboratory tours for high schools, universities, and science professionals, participated in SubMerge, a marine science festival coordinated by Hudson River Park Trust, and collaborated with BioBAT art space on an exhibit featuring IEC's monitoring projects. In addition, in March 2025, a video produced by The Nature Conservancy highlighting some of IEC's work in Connecticut will be released.

Partnerships

The goal of IEC's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is to provide technical input and feedback to help evaluate IEC's water quality projects, build upon and strengthen regional partnerships, and pursue new sources of funding. IEC also actively participates in many stakeholder initiatives, workgroups, and committees to enhance communication and coordination of water quality efforts within the district, including the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) Management Committee, the LISS Science and Technical Advisory Committee, the LISS Water Quality Monitoring Workgroup, the Unified Water Study, and the LISS Pathogen Monitoring Network.

Short-Notice Sampling Response

IEC has the capability to perform short-notice inspections—sampling, monitoring, and analyses—in response to regional environmental emergencies, concerns, or natural disasters under an EPA approved QAPP. In 2023, in conjunction with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, IEC sampled drinking water fountains at a school being used as a migrant shelter in order to ensure the water's safety. The ability to mobilize and perform sampling quickly at the request of local agencies makes IEC a valuable resource in times of need.

Compliance Monitoring

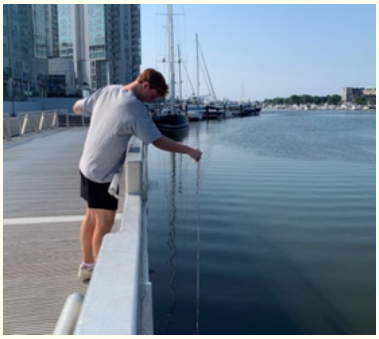
IEC conducts inspections at industrial facilities and municipal water pollution control facilities. These inspections, which are planned in coordination with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) and federal authorities, include effluent sampling and an inspection of processes, equipment, plant records, and stormwater permits, and are conducted according to an EPA-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). Samples collected at these facilities are analyzed to determine compliance with IEC's Water Quality Regulations and with each facility's specific NPDES and SPDES permits, where applicable. In 2015, EPA Region 1 agreed that, provided inspections are conducted in accordance with an established framework and meet certain minimum requirements to sufficiently ascertain compliance, the states can count IEC's inspections towards the goals outlined in their compliance monitoring strategy (CMS) with EPA. The Commission reports results of inspections to the facility, the appropriate state environmental departments, and EPA. In 2024, IEC conducted seven inspections at municipal water pollution control facilities at the request of CTDEEP. These inspections took place at facilities that discharge into IEC's District waters or sewer systems, ranging in location from Greenwich to New Haven.

Unified Water Study

Long Island Sound embayments are more prone to hypoxia and other impairments than open waters. With this in mind, the Unified Water Study, coordinated by Save the Sound, Inc., aims to compare water quality within and among Long Island Sound embayments. IEC has been a partner in this effort since 2017, performing water quality monitoring of dissolved oxygen, salinity, temperature, turbidity, and macrophytes (algae) in Little Neck Bay and Manhasset Bay. Although these sites are in New York, they benefit the shared watershed of the Long Island Sound and contribute to a larger network of water quality in both NY and CT. Learn more about the results of this study at: www.savethesound.org/water-monitoring ecological-health

Long Island Sound Monitoring

Since 1991, the IEC has conducted water quality sampling surveys in support of the Long Island Sound Study. Staff monitor dissolved oxygen (DO), as well as parameters that may influence DO, in the Connecticut/New York waters of the Long Island Sound, its embayments, and the Upper East River. Over the years, the scope of these surveys has expanded to include additional stations, year-round surveying, and added parameters to assess coastal acidification. IEC disseminates weekly survey summaries to stakeholders and produces a season summary with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, which are available on our website.



Pathogen Monitoring on the Long Island Sound

While long-term monitoring programs of the ecological health of the open waters and embayments of Long Island Sound are well-established, a data gap exists for pathogen indicators. In 2023, through funding provided by LISS, IEC piloted a Pathogen Monitoring Network, which coordinates pathogen monitoring across Long Island Sound embayments and tributaries. The network, developed in conjunction with NYSDEC and CTDEEP, recruits watershed-based groups to collect samples for pathogens, which are analyzed by a state-certified environmental laboratory. As of 2024, this program includes 10 groups in 17 waterbodies across NY and CT.