

Appropriations Committee Follow-up Questions

Broadband

Q: How does the broadband proposal overlap with/interface with the Connecticut Education Network (CEN)?

A: CEN is a governmental entity created by the General Assembly to meet the needs of institutions such as education, health care, research organizations, municipal and state government facilities, and public libraries. CEN plays a critical role providing cost-effective access to these community institutions, and we see limited overlap with the broadband proposal as currently written.

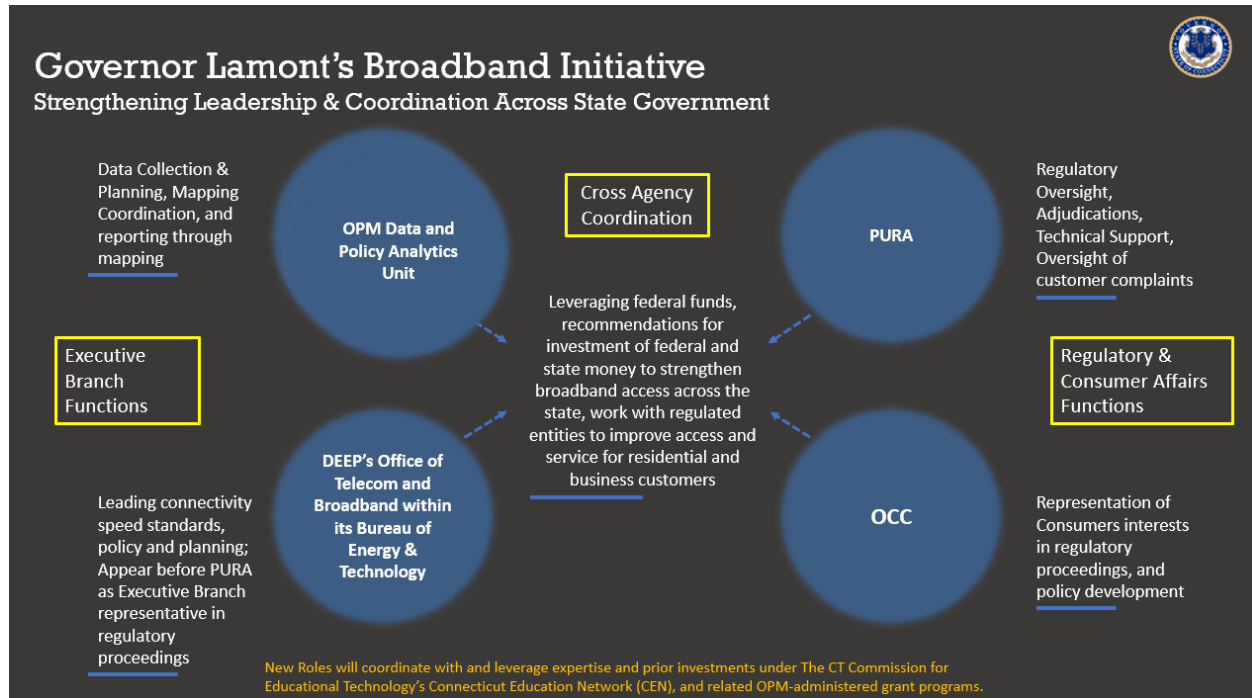
Q: Provide a more detailed breakdown of the various tranches of money allocated for broadband.

A: A detailed breakdown is provided for each agency/entity below:

An Act Concerning Equitable Access to Broadband					
	New	Personal	Fringe	Other	
FY 2022	Positions	Services	Benefits	Expenses	Total
Office of Policy and Management	2	\$ 187,384	\$ 178,015	\$104,000	\$ 469,399
Office of Consumer Counsel	2	\$ 187,447	\$ 178,075	\$ -	\$ 365,522
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	3	\$ 257,995	\$ 228,171	\$ -	\$ 486,166
Public Utilities Regulatory Authority	10	\$ 809,751	\$ 716,144	\$ -	\$1,525,895
	17	\$1,442,577	\$1,300,404	\$104,000	\$2,846,981
	New	Personal	Fringe	Other	
FY 2023	Positions	Services	Benefits	Expenses	Total
Office of Policy and Management	2	\$ 194,591	\$ 184,861	\$ 2,000	\$ 381,452
Office of Consumer Counsel	2	\$ 194,657	\$ 184,924	\$ -	\$ 379,580
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	3	\$ 267,918	\$ 236,946	\$ -	\$ 504,864
Public Utilities Regulatory Authority	10	\$ 840,895	\$ 743,688	\$ -	\$1,584,583
	17	\$1,498,061	\$1,350,419	\$ 2,000	\$2,850,480

Q: How many total dollars and positions are allocated for the broadband proposal? In which agencies and budgets? Who is responsible to whom?

A: See the chart above for information on the agency budgets. The following chart represents the relationships between the different agencies in implementing the proposal:



With respect to dollars and positions associated with DEEP and PURA staff in the broadband proposal, the budget provides for 3 staff within DEEP's Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy to establish an Office of Telecom and Broadband. This Office would provide centralized planning and policy development, and coordinate with other executive branch agencies to deploy state and federal resources in order to achieve universal access.

Position	Number	Salary
Staff Attorney 2	1	\$89,858
Research Analyst	1	\$67,459
Office Director-Program	1	\$100,679
Total	3	\$257,995

The budget provides for 10 staff within PURA to support the implementation of the broadband bill. Currently, PURA does not have jurisdiction over the broadband industry, and exercises very narrow jurisdiction in the telecommunications and cable industries. Thus, PURA has zero staff dedicated to telecommunications/cable/broadband today. In comparison, Massachusetts has a state agency dedicated to telecom and cable, which employs approximately 25 FTEs.

Position	Number	Salary
Staff Attorney 1 - Adjudications	1.00	\$ 77,672
Staff Attorney 2 - Adjudications	1.00	\$ 89,858
Staff Attorney 1 - EOE	1.00	\$ 77,672
Staff Attorney 2 - EOE	1.00	\$ 89,858
Public Utilities Engineer 2 (Telecom)	1.00	\$ 72,537
Public Utilities Engineer 3	1.00	\$ 91,402
Utilities Examiner 2	1.00	\$ 89,858
Public Utilities Supervisor of Technical Analysis	1.00	\$ 90,858
Consumer Information Representative	1.00	\$ 62,577
Research Analyst	1.00	\$ 67,459
Total	10.00	\$ 809,751

Q: What is the cost per linear foot of fiber optic cable for broadband?

A: \$75k per linear mile is a good estimate for deployment of fiber for broadband. There are approximately 100 square miles unbuilt in the Northwest corner of the state.

Q: Can COVID funding be used for broadband buildout?

A: In December 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act established and funded a number of broadband programs. Section 905(d) of the Act allocated \$300 million to a Broadband Infrastructure Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce. States or political subdivisions thereof may apply for grants from this program for certain covered broadband projects. This program will be open in April. In addition, it created the Emergency Broadband Connectivity Program that has a \$3.2 billion fund for the FCC to provide subsidies to qualifying low-income households toward the retail cost of broadband Internet access service and certain connected devices. This subsidy program will end six months after the date on which the COVID-19 public health emergency has ended.

On March 10, 2021 Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which contains similar provisions relating to broadband support. It establishes a Homeowner Assistance Fund “to mitigate financial hardships associated with the coronavirus pandemic” including “internet service, including broadband internet access service”. The Act also reserves \$195.3 billion in payments to states and \$130.2 billion to “metropolitan cities, nonentitlement units of local government, and counties” to cover costs incurred by December 31, 2024 for pandemic response, including, but not limited to “to make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.”

Q: What are we trying to accomplish with the broadband proposal? Who are we trying to attract?

A: The bill contains many components that will move the state toward the proposal’s stated goal of attaining, on or before January 1, 2027, “universal access to (1) broadband Internet

download speeds averaging one gigabit per second, and (2) broadband Internet upload speeds averaging two hundred megabits per second..." Identifying those areas of the state that do not meet these criteria is the first step toward this goal. Streamlining processes to install the broadband network is another component. Customer disclosure requirements will educate users as to what service is available in its area and help them make informed service choices, generating incentives for broadband service providers to offer stronger networks. Additionally, the 2027 goal is built into the definition of a local capital improvement project.

Budget savings, rescissions, and holdbacks

Q: What public facilities, if any, are slated to be closed temporarily or permanently?

A: The list of buildings to be demolished after the construction of the new WDHQ is attached in the document "WDHQ Decommissions.03.10.21." Additional savings opportunities are being explored in the ongoing building assessment as well as fleet reduction strategies related to DEEP's sustainability plan. Direct impacts to bureaus/programs have yet to be determined.

Q: Provide a more detailed breakdown of how the \$700,000 and \$1.4 million in savings will be spread across the agencies.

A: We are starting with the facilities closures as described in the "WDHQ Decommissions.03.10.21" document and additional savings decisions will be made as needed.

Q: How is our agency being affected by these savings? What are the direct affects to Bureaus and programs?

A: Aside from the facilities closures as noted above, any other impacts are yet to be determined.

Human resources

Q: How will DEEP be working under the new structure with DAS going forward? Provide a more detailed breakdown of agency impact.

A: DEEP will continue to work closely with OPM and DAS under the new organizational structure. The design provides for more specialization within the different functional areas of human resources and labor relations. This includes the creation of specialized PODs within DAS for HR Policy & Information Systems, Benefits and Leaves, Workers' Compensation and Talent Solutions. Implementation took effect in August 2020. DEEP will continue to work directly through on-site resources regarding labor matters and human resource functions and has capitalized on statewide efficiencies insuring more consistent standards and control, and a critical mass of competencies, while also having the flexibility and mobility to respond to agency needs.

Some realized benefits:

- Conversion to electronic personnel records
- Standardized job posting requirements and tools to manage recruitments
- Coordination with leadership and unions on labor related matters
- Consistency in statewide related policies administered by DAS and OLR
- Efficiencies in workers' compensation investigations and claims
- Compliance with FMLA and medical leave requests
- Efficiencies with retirement applications

Here is the HR and LR Power point link with their presentation and organizational structure A Pulsed Approach (ct.gov).

COVID expenditures

Q: Be prepared to speak in more detail to COVID expenditures.

A:

Total FY'21 costs YTD	\$ 310,269.32
Pending OPM recovery	\$ 200,126.56
To be billed (OPM)	\$ 95,928.06
To be billed (FEMA/DPH)	\$ 14,214.70

Q: Are there additional ways we could be applying COVID funding for our agency?

A: No, we have looked at every opportunity for applying COVID funding. We cannot use COVID funding for supplanting programmatic expenditures.

Outdoor recreation

Q: Will parks be open, and open on time, this year?

A: We are currently implementing preparations and recruiting around a plan to provide a full season of services, including camping, swimming, Lifeguards, museums and education centers, public facilities, including restrooms, parking fee collection for out-of-state visitors, etc.

Our ability to do all of that, is contingent, upon changing advice from public health officials, and, significantly, on our ability to recruit and retain an adequate number of seasonal employees to help us provide all of those services.

We will be working towards that goal, throughout the spring, and we will be providing updates to the public on our website in early April.

It's important to note that state parks and forests remained open to the public and staffed throughout the pandemic, with narrow exceptions (Kent Falls S.P. and Seaside S.P. were initially closed at the outset of the pandemic due to an early concern about the ability to provide for safe social distancing given the features and size of those parks). Park visitor capacity was limited at some of the most heavily visited parks (e.g., Sleeping Giant, shoreline parks) in order to promote social distancing, and all parks that closed to capacity reopened either the following day or later in the same day once crowds diminished. Overall, even with the lower capacity limits in place, we saw a significant increase in the use of our parks starting last March, and throughout the year. For instance, Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison saw an increase from 2.22 million day-use visitors in 2019 to 2.67 million as of Fall 2020 – a 20% year-over-year increase, despite parking being reduced by 50%. There are other statistics that we feel demonstrated the significant increase in people discovering or rediscovering the outdoors in 2020: Call for service for DEEP's Environmental Conservation officers tripled in our state parks. 2020 also marked the first time we've ever had to close our Wildlife Management Areas because they were full to capacity. There was also a near 80% increase in capacity-related closures of state boat launches in 2020. DEEP regularly issued updated COVID-19 guidance on park operations, and also established a website (<https://portal.ct.gov/whatsopenoutdoors>) to provide real-time updates on closures/status for beaches and lakefront swim areas to better enable visitors to plan and access outdoor recreation assets during the pandemic.

Q: Will we be opening fishing season early this year?

A: Yes. Governor Lamont issued Executive Order 10B opening the fishing season effective March 4, 2021.

Q: Passport to Parks – provide a more detailed breakdown of staff and operations support.

A: DEEP provides the Office of Fiscal Analysis a monthly report which details budgets and expenses at the management unit level. We have provided the most recent report on revenue and expenses from the Passport to the Parks Account, for your reference. Importantly, the Passport to the Parks program has succeeded in its goal of providing a stable, predictable funding source to support the operations of our state parks.

The Passport to the Parks program was created in 2017 as a reaction to the significant budget cuts in 2014 and 2015 that left the Parks Division with a 45% reduction in funding to support seasonal staffing of our parks and forests. As a result of those significant cuts, many services that are provided to the public had to be curtailed, including the closure of some campgrounds, reduction in hours or days of week of the operation of museums and nature centers, reductions in lifeguards, as well as other impacts.

The creation of the dedicated Passport account (funded by a \$5/year fee on non-commercial motor vehicle registrations) has allowed us to restore all of those impacted services in more recent years, and has provided predictable, sustainable funding to allow us to plan from year to year.

Funding from the Passport account supports all of our seasonal staffing salary costs (over 500 employees in a typical year), including fringe costs, all of our “fixed and discretionary” costs throughout the park system, as well as 35 full-time parks’ field staff, including their fringe benefits.

Waste

Q: How is DEEP addressing the MIRA plant closure and its impacts on MIRA and municipalities, including costs to municipalities?

A: DEEP appreciates the Committee’s interest in the status of the MIRA facility in Hartford and the broader, but related waste crisis that Connecticut is facing. DEEP is very focused on working with all Connecticut municipalities and businesses to address the increasing cost and decreasing capacity for disposal of municipal solid waste, given the expected closure of the MIRA facility in 2022, coupled with the projected 40% decline in landfill capacity in the Northeast by 2026.

In the spring of 2020, MIRA sought a \$330 million capital investment from the state of Connecticut to keep the Hartford plant operational for the 30 years and likely annual subsidies. DEEP provided a [letter to the MIRA Board](#) in July 2020 reflecting the reasons for not supporting this taxpayer or ratepayer investment in this particular project.

Commissioner Dykes launched the [Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management](#) (CCSMM) in the fall of 2020. Over 78 municipalities from across the state signed a pledge to participate and many more have attended meetings. The CCSMM committed to work together to share experiences, engage all stakeholders, seek creative solutions, identify a menu of options, and commit to further actions to scale up sustainable alternatives to waste disposal. Approximately 30% of the tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) sent to landfills or waste-to-energy facilities comprises food scraps and yard waste that can be tipped more affordably at an anaerobic digester or compost facility, if cost-effective transportation and collection can be arranged. About 40% of annual MSW tonnage consists of paper, glass, plastic, and metal that could be diverted through recycling programs. The CCSMM convened four workgroups were convened focused on extended producers responsibility, increasing recycling, addressing organics and reducing the waste stream and a public request for solutions was issued.

The CCSMM published a menu of options and committed to further action at its early January meetings. No individual action will solve the waste crisis we are facing, but collectively we can make a difference. DEEP is working with municipalities, regional entities, MIRA and the private sector to identify and implement steps that policymakers could consider which could help reduce disposal tonnage, reduce our reliance on out of state landfills, and provide environmental benefits and cost savings for CT communities.

In addition, DEEP is also engaging with the MIRA Board and executive team on their plans to carry out their responsibilities, including closure and decommissioning of the MIRA waste-to-

energy facility, and on MIRA's plans to provide for reliable disposal for MIRA member towns in the near term.

Cybersecurity

Q: Is there a place in state government that is tasked with handling cybersecurity?

A: *The Connecticut Cybersecurity Resource Page is available on the following state webpage: <https://portal.ct.gov/connecticut-cybersecurity-resource-page>.*

With respect to the electric, gas and water utilities regulated by PURA, we oversee the implementation and review of the utilities' cybersecurity programs through the normal course of business and through an annual dedicated review process.

Q: How are we embedding cybersecurity into what we are building, including broadband buildout?

A: Recognizing the emergence of serious cybersecurity challenges facing public utilities, and along with the growing national attention directed to cybersecurity planning, PURA established a Connecticut Public Utilities Cybersecurity Action Plan in 2016. The Plan established a collaborative process among State officials and regulated electric, natural gas, and major water utilities to ensure that public utilities are taking proper precautions to protect their corporate networks, critical infrastructure, and customer data.

Since 2017, PURA has conducted annual meetings separately between its senior leadership and the senior leadership of Eversource, The United Illuminating Company, Aquarion Water, and Connecticut Water Company to review cybersecurity programs and the kinds of cybersecurity threats faced by each entity. Through this annual review process, PURA leverages the expertise from other state agencies, including staff from DEMHS, the Connecticut Intelligence Center (CTIC), and DAS. Subsequently, the Authority issues reports following the conclusion of those meetings, all of which can be found on the PURA website. The 2020 report is expected to be issued imminently.

PURA and the participating utilities also take part in the Connecticut Cybersecurity Committee and have engaged in multiple cyber-related exercises, notably the Governor's statewide exercise called the Emergency Planning and Preparedness Initiative (EPPI) in 2019, which was conducted in conjunction with the North American Electric Reliability Corporation's GridEx. PURA also participated in the planning of the 2020 EPPI to be held in conjunction with the FEMA national-level exercise, which was also primarily geared toward cybersecurity. Unfortunately, the 2020 exercise was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With respect to broadband, cable and other telecommunications providers, PURA does not currently have the same statutory authority to regulate these entities as it does with respect to the aforementioned electric, gas and water utilities. Currently, our most significant regulatory

oversight is with respect to the POTS (plain old telephone service) provided by Frontier. As such, we have invited both Frontier and other telecommunications companies to participate in our cybersecurity review process over the years, but the companies have almost universally declined and none currently participate in our annual reviews. Should the proposed legislation be enacted, which enhances and expands PURA's oversight role with respect to such companies, PURA could expand its current Cybersecurity Action Plan to be inclusive of additional companies.

Aquatic invasive species

Q: What is the status of the Lakes, Rivers, and Ponds account?

A:

- *Revenues (resident/non-resident sources)*
 - *Total revenues to date \$623,090*
 - *\$406,670 from FY 2020*
 - *\$216,420 YTD from FY 2021*
 - *Resident revenues to date \$612,811*
 - *\$400,691 from FY 2020*
 - *\$212,120 YTD from FY 2021*
 - *Non-resident revenues to date \$10,279*
 - *\$5,979 from FY 2020*
 - *\$4,300 YTD from FY 2021*
- *Expenditures*
 - *\$0*
- *Fund balance*
 - *\$623,090*
- *What the funds are used on*
 - *We've defined four areas of expenditure:*
 - *~\$360,000: Grants in 2021*
 - *~\$20,000: Outreach (pavement marking signs, signs on posts, and social media/PSA plan)*
 - *~\$50,000: Aquatic Invasive Species Stewards at select launches*
 - *~\$50,000: Invasive Species Coordinator at UConn (0.5 FTE)*
- *Implementation status*
 - *Grants (target completion dates)*
 - *Request for Proposals: done*
 - *Application Period close: done*
 - *Proposal Review/Selection: March 31, 2021*
 - *Selected Applicants Notified: April 5, 2021*
 - *Contract Execution: May 1, 2021*
 - *Outreach*
 - *Define Scope of Services and Cost: May 14, 2021*
 - *Implement Outreach Strategy: TBD*

- *Aquatic Invasive Species Stewards at Select Boat Launches*
 - *Recruit Stewards: April 15, 2021*
- *Invasive Species Coordinator*
 - *Confirm availability of complementary funding (federal aid for terrestrial invasive species): April 15, 2021*
 - *Execution of Project Agreement with UConn: May 1, 2021*
 - *Recruit Invasive Species Coordinator: June 1, 2021*