



## Appropriations Conservation & Development Subcommittee working session – 3/8/2023

Members of the Conservation and Development Subcommittee,

During DEEP's Budget presentation before the Appropriations Committee, we committed to follow up on the following items ahead of our subcommittee working session.

We look forward to discussing these topics and others during our session on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

### Positions/Staffing

Please refer to the attachment “DEEP staffing by fund” for number of filled positions, number of pending positions, and number of open positions that are currently in the process of being filled.

Here is a projection for FY 23 PS spending by fund for DEEP employees:

**DEP43000**

**B-66 - Fiscal Year 2023**

**For the month ended January 2023**

Title	Approp Avail (Net)	Expenditures to Date	Estimated Requirements to EOY	Balance EOY
<b>GENERAL FUND PS (11000)*</b>	24,103,530	14,284,935	9,818,595	0
<b>TRANSP. FUND PS (12001)</b>	3,699,891	1,468,262.88	2,231,628	0
<b>PUC FUND PS (12006)</b>	15,551,323	7,782,881	7,768,442.16	0

\* DEEP has positions covered under other GF accounts as well. These include Emergency Spills Response, Solid Waste Management, Underground Storage Tanks, Clean Air, Environmental Conservation, Environmental Quality & Hatcheries.

### Temporary Worker Retirees and Seasonal Employees

- 16 Temporary Worker Retirees (TWR) are currently working for DEEP.
- At the peak last summer, DEEP had 672 seasonal employees.

### Environmental Conservation Police

	Filled Positions	Pending Positions	Vacant Positions with Refill Authority	Total Positions
Grand Total	52	0	7	59

### Emergency Response Unit

	Filled Positions	Pending Positions	Vacant Positions with Refill Authority	Total Positions
Grand Total	13	0	0	13

## ARPA

Over the past two budget years, \$85.6M in ARPA funding has been allocated to DEEP - \$15.77M in 2022, and \$69.85 in 2023. Please see the attached spreadsheet “[ARPA Status Report 3.3.23](#)” for details on individual project status.

## Facility Closures

- Recognizing that all buildings consume energy and resources, rightsizing DEEP’s facilities footprint is a critical piece of its strategy for achieving sustainability goals. Using asset management software and the National Park Service’s asset priority index (API) methodology, DEEP has evaluated each of its buildings to determine their significance in supporting the agency’s mission. Using key information such as building condition, efficiency, location, and utilization asset management software is helping inform the agency’s decisions on what buildings should be maintained and which should be decommissioned.
- DEEP is currently making plans to decommission nine buildings once its new Net Zero Energy Western District Headquarters facility is completed in summer 2023. Please see the attached report “[WDHQ Decommissions.03.10.21](#)” for additional information on those buildings.

## Passport to the Parks

Please see attached CY 22 Passport to Parks budget summary “[P2P CY 22 Budget Summary and CY Expenditures Summary](#).”

**Please provide a map of the planned three park districts to clarify what territory the proposed new, third central park district supervisor would oversee.**

Our initial plans are to include the centrally located shoreline parks into the new district; however, we are still finalizing plans to organize and integrate a new Central Region in the most operationally efficient manner. The State Parks Division currently operates with two operations supervisors (East and West). Currently, the East and West supervisors oversee 11 management units, with each unit

containing multiple parks (geographically delineated east and west), 11 direct reports, and over 30 full-time staff. A **draft organizational chart is attached** showing how park units could be reorganized under a new Operations Supervisor position. In addition, the current parks organizational chart is included for reference.

### **How many pieces of accessibility equipment would be able to be purchased with the proposed \$500k, and where would the equipment be made available?**

DEEP seeks to maximize equitable access to the outdoors to allow individuals with mobility impairments greater access to state parks. The final determination of location and count remains to be established. Initial estimates indicate costs would be approximately \$20,000-\$25,000 per wheelchair, though it remains to be determined what features, systems, supports, and specifications would be implemented.

### **What are staffing levels in the radiation unit?**

Currently, within the Radiation Division, nine out of the fourteen authorized positions are filled using a few funding sources. Five staff are funded through the Nuclear Safety Emergency Program (NSEP), which is a dedicated fund supported through an assessment on the Millstone power station to support the state's emergency preparedness and response efforts. NSEP supports the Radiation Division's staffing and training costs associated with DEEP's role in providing oversight to ensure safety and emergency preparedness and emergency response capabilities. Two staff in the Radiation Division are also supported by federal grant funds through the Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA). The MQSA program ensures the quality of health care for women. The Radiation Division has delegated authority from the FDA to inspect facilities around the state performing mammography services. Seven staff are supported by Environmental Quality/General Fund fees.

### **Please provide expected FY 23 revenues and expenditures from the PUC fund.**

DEEP's share of the FY'23 PUC budget equals \$30,285,405 and serves as the basis for the PUC assessment. We believe the revenue collected will match the total assessed value. Current projections are to fully expend our appropriation.

### **Environmental Justice staffing at DEEP**

- Six total staff are currently committed to the Office of Equity and Environmental Justice (EJ Office):
  - DEEP is in the final stages of hiring a [Director](#) for the EJ Office. This director will provide vision and leadership for DEEP's EJ team, which is growing as the agency develops its environmental justice, Indian Affairs, and DEI commitments and as the legislature considers strengthening the state's environmental justice law.
  - The EJ Office currently has two staff: a planning specialist and an EA3. They are the face of the agency's EJ work. They work on a range of matters, much of it externally focused. Their commitments include coordinating public participation in EJ permitting processes; providing feedback for grant applications involving EJ concerns; coordinating CEEJAC meetings; and meeting with constituents around local issues and concerns.

- Recruitment just closed for an [EA2](#) for the EJ Office. This staff person will focus on developing and maintaining an Environmental Justice mapping tool for the state and other data-driven efforts, as well as engaging in the EJ Office's bread and butter work of facilitating and supporting meaningful community engagement; promoting environmental justice and equity considerations in decision making throughout DEEP; supporting government-to-government consultation with tribes; and effectuating meaningful DEI reforms.
- DEEP is midway through developing the recruitment for two dedicated Indian Affairs positions: a Staff Attorney 1 and an Environmental Analyst 1. These new staff will play a critical role in managing the responsibilities assigned to the agency in Section 47-66g of the Connecticut General Statutes; coordinating grant program; coordinating infrastructure needs and repairs; maintaining staff records; assisting with managing infrastructure projects; and acting as a point of contact for Tribes and state agencies that have questions about tribal issues.
- Additionally, the Governor's Budget would add two more positions to the EJ office to work on environmental justice-related regulations and legislation. These new staff will work across DEEP's permitting programs and DEEP's Legal Office to develop rules and regulations to implement environmental justice-related permitting bills, including coordinating with other state agencies and facilitating public engagement and comments. These positions will also help review permit applicants' assessments of environmental and public health stressors.

## **Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy – Nine Positions**

How will addition of nine positions to the Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy lower energy costs for residential, business, and commercial users?

What will these new employees do, after IRA funding opportunities have been exhausted?

- The expansion of positions will help lower energy costs by providing the staff resources necessary to apply for and implement multiple streams of federal funding totaling approximately \$500 million, not including tax incentives and some competitive opportunities. This will require extensive stakeholder engagement, planning, program design, grant applications and grant compliance, all of which requires staff support. As a result, the State will be able to:
  - Effectively braid federal tax incentives and rebates for efficient appliances, weatherization, and heating systems with existing programs so that Connecticut residents and businesses have access to higher incentives for building energy retrofits that will help them reduce costs and increase their resilience, with the highest rebates going to those with the most need (80% of area median income);
  - Plan and implement transmission upgrades that will allow us to incorporate critical offshore wind and hydropower into our electric grid, increasing our energy resilience and decreasing the impacts of volatile pricing associated with fossil fuels;
  - Leverage various federal funding sources to implement prioritized grid resilience upgrades, thereby reducing the cost of those critical upgrades for ratepayers.
  - Support initiatives related to developing a hydrogen economy in Connecticut.
  - The various streams of federal funding have different timelines for implementation, currently ranging from four to 10 years. These deadlines for implementation may get

extended, as they did with ARRA funding in the past. Program compliance reporting may also extend beyond that timeframe. DEEP does not anticipate a reduction in responsibilities before the end of that timeframe, is happy to reexamine responsibilities at that time, and believes that any adjustments in staffing could be handled by attrition.

## Road Salt

- Please provide a variety of information about road salt and its environmental impacts, particularly on well water quality:
  - Road salt can dissolve in runoff and impact soil, soil water, groundwater, surface water, and groundwater. Salt – especially over application of salt – can accumulate in the soil and leach into groundwater on an on-going basis. If drinking water relies on groundwater impacted by salt runoff, alternative drinking water supplies may be necessary.
- How much funding would be needed to study the impacts of road salt on well water quality?

The impacts of road salt on groundwater quality are well documented in CT. Each well impact scenario is unique and has a different solution which may include redrilling a new well with extended steel casing or altering or repairing stormwater drainage features.

- Please provide information on current water sampling efforts and note whether any apply to well water.

DEEP requires the party responsible for causing the source of pollution to monitor the water quality of impacted wells and to take corrective measures. Entities responsible for monitoring well water include DOT, municipalities, and commercial landscape entities that perform snow removal. Other than PFAS analysis, DEEP does not have a funding source to monitor a significant number of private wells.

- Please provide an update on any efforts to address water quality and road salt issues in Tolland and surrounding towns.

DEEP is currently working with the Towns of Tolland, Coventry and Ellington to mitigate impacts from excessive road salting practices. Each Town has retained an environmental consultant to evaluate the case specific scenarios that likely resulted in the impacts and will recommend corrective measures. The Town of Tolland retained a consultant to address the salt pollution in the “vineyard” section of Town (Zinfandel Circle/Merlot Way/Derek Drive) in Fall of 2022. The consultant has reviewed DEEP investigation reports and is working to identify corrective measures for the area-wide groundwater pollution. The Town will prepare a remedy analysis and will update impacted property owners on the status of their work.

- What are alternatives to road salt and what would the impact to the state budget be, if road salt were replaced with various alternative treatment methods?

Prior studies have identified sodium chloride as the primary de-icer because it is economical and effective, although magnesium chloride is useful as a pre-wetting agent during excessively cold weather. There are other alternatives, such as acetates and organic by-products, but they are more costly, less effective and have a greater impact on the environment.

## **Bureau of Natural Resources – Black Bear position**

Regarding the proposed additional staff person for black bears:

- Is there currently a wildlife biologist dedicated 100% to black bears? If not, explain current staffing for addressing black bear issues.

The Deep furbearer program currently has three wildlife biologist positions (one of which is currently under active recruitment) who work on bears and other fur-bearing animals (bobcats, foxes, coyotes, etc.). With the black bear population and bear-human impacts dramatically increasing around the state, there is a need for additional expertise to address these conflicts.

- Please list all functions and activities that it is anticipated the new staff person would handle.

Connecticut's growing and increasingly habituated black bear population has led to an increasing number of human-bear interactions in recent years, including nearly 70 home entries in 2022. This position will fund a wildlife biologist with a specialization in the human dimensions of human-wildlife conflicts, particularly bear issues. This position will help DEEP craft better communication initiatives, engage more effectively with more diverse constituencies, and identify areas where the agency needs to take a different approach to wildlife and natural resource conservation. Adding this position will allow the other two fur bearing biologists on the team to focus their time in the field addressing issues bears and other wildlife.

## **Air quality monitoring**

- DEEP operates a statewide monitoring network that consists of 14 sites monitoring air pollutants and meteorological parameters. In addition, DEEP has been supporting a wide variety of community-based air quality monitoring efforts by advising and assisting on prospective projects. An air quality sensor loan program is currently being developed with the goal of providing select air quality sensors to help communities build their programs. The Air Bureau has assisted with communities on monitoring projects across Connecticut such as those outlined at this [link](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/air_monitoring/AirMonitoringFactSheet.pdf) ([https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/air\\_monitoring/AirMonitoringFactSheet.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/air_monitoring/AirMonitoringFactSheet.pdf)) which provides a summary of DEEP's current statewide and community-based Air Quality Monitoring efforts.

## **What are your plans for the Kennebunk Dam demolition and for the other dams in the state?**

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG), in partnership with Save the Sound (STS), has been recommended for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) funding for a \$15M project intended to lead to the removal of Kinneytown Dam in Seymour, CT. DEEP is providing \$1.6 million from SEP to match the NOAA grant. To DEEP's current knowledge the dam is still owned by Hydroland, but they have signed the letter of intent to sell the project and will be working to transfer ownership to the Connecticut Brownfield Land Bank, Inc. Once this transfer is complete, additional progress can be made on the project to remove the dam. Next steps:

- NVCG and STS will proceed with design and permitting to remove the dam
- In addition to the SEP funding, DEEP is partnering with the NVCG by providing technical and administrative assistance.

State-wide, DEEP's EC, EQ, and Energy groups coordinate on dam removals. Dam removals are prioritized for structures that no longer serve an intended purpose and for which removal benefits the state through risk reduction, natural resources management enhancement, and recreational considerations. DEEP works with dam owners, municipalities, and NGOs to remove identified dams using available federal, state, municipal, and/or private funds.