

## Rep. Nuccio Requests for Information for the Subcommittee Work Sessions

### Headcount questions:

1. What is the authorized headcount, the funded headcount and the filled headcount for your area?

Authorized: 995

Funded: 945

Filled: 832

2. If there is change in headcount (either up or down) please provide an explanation of the change.
  - a. If there is a positive change in headcount, please explain why these positions are needed

The Governor's recommended budget adds 13 positions to DEEP's budget:

- **Provide funding for Black Bear Response – \$74,184 and one position (Wildlife Biologist)** 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.
- **Provide Funding for Additional Parks Division Employees – \$97,638 and one position (Environmental Protection Operations Supervisor)** The Connecticut state park system currently operates with two Operations Supervisors. Each oversee 11 management units, with each unit containing multiple parks; 11 direct reports; and over 30 full-time staff. This new position will allow for the creation of a third region (Central), taking over a portion of the management units and thereby providing for more efficient operations, greater supervision of staff, and better delivery of maintenance services to parks across the state.
- **Provide Funding for Environmental Justice – \$129,317 and two positions (Environmental Analysts)** - This funding will support two positions in DEEP's Office of Equity and Environmental Justice to begin coordinating with staff 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' environmental and public health assessments.
- **Provide Funding for Additional Staff in BETP – \$1,389,487 including fringe benefits and nine positions** – These positions will support the pursuit and implementation of opportunities under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and IJIA for the following: to develop hydrogen policy and support deployment of hydrogen

infrastructure in Connecticut, including potential implementation of the US Department of Energy (DOE) IIJA regional Hydrogen Hub program; to pursue two IIJA DOE funding opportunities to support significant new investments in transmission to interconnect clean, reliable resources, such as Canadian hydropower and offshore wind; to implement nearly \$100M in IRA rebates for building decarbonization, energy efficiency, building energy code adoption, and seamless integration of IRA tax credits with existing Conservation and Load Management (C&LM) programs; to address growing concerns for energy security and grid reliability, including climate change and geopolitical events, that are exacerbating winter fuel security risks (natural gas and heating oil) and causing price volatility; and to successfully coordinate existing state affordable housing programs with the \$50+ million coming through the IRA to advance whole building retrofits in affordable housing/vulnerable communities.

b. If these adds are legislatively driven, what piece of legislation is driving the increase?

N/A

3. Are there any vacant positions in your headcount?
- a. If yes, how are they budgeted into your plan? (as a full year FTE or partial? Are they fulltime or part time?)

There are 108 vacant positions with refill authority in our headcount. We are in the process of recruiting new staff to fill these positions, which were generated by retirements, resignations, and other routine turnover.

b. What is the anticipated start date of your vacancies? Are they staggered throughout the year, or all anticipated to start on July 1?

Over the past 15 months, DEEP has been refilling all positions as soon as a vacancy was anticipated, for example when an employee filed for retirement or turned in a letter of resignation.

4. How many vacancies did you have at year end on 06/30?

72

a. How many vacancies did you have throughout the year last fiscal year?

In CY 2022, 105 staff retired from DEEP, and 39 staff transferred or resigned.

b. How many new hires did you have in the same time period?

In CY 2022, DEEP hired 143 new employees.

5. What is the average cost of an FTE for your ,area?

\$86,875

6. What is the average fringe cost of an FTE in the comptroller's area?

Fringe benefits costs are based on the retirement plan in which each employee is enrolled. Average rates, as a percentage of payroll, for FY 2023 are as follows:

	Retirement Plans				
	SERS Reg	SERS HD	ARP	Judges	TRS
SERS Regular	67.40%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
SERS HD	n/a	91.49%	n/a	n/a	n/a
ARP	n/a	n/a	14.60%	n/a	n/a
Judges	n/a	n/a	n/a	111.34%	n/a
TRS	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	38.89%
Unemployment Comp	0.18%	0.18%	0.18%	0.18%	0.18%
Group Life	0.23%	0.23%	0.23%	0.23%	0.23%
Social Security FICA	6.20%	6.20%	6.20%	6.20%	6.20%
Social Security Medicare	1.45%	1.45%	1.45%	1.45%	1.45%
Active Health	<u>22.00%</u>	<u>22.00%</u>	<u>22.00%</u>	<u>22.00%</u>	<u>22.00%</u>
<b>TOTAL FRINGE RATE</b>	<b>97.46%</b>	<b>121.55%</b>	<b>44.66%</b>	<b>141.40%</b>	<b>68.95%</b>

Lapse Questions:

1. Were there any lapsing accounts on 06/30?
  - a. If yes, what were the accounts?
  - b. If yes, what was the lapse balance?
  - c. If yes, what drove the lapse? What spending didn't occur that was planned to occur?

Please refer to Exhibits B-3, C-5, and C-6 of the Office of the State Comptroller's Budgetary/Statutory Basis (GAAP Based Budgeting) Annual Report: [Budgetar 2022.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#) for this information.

2. If there is a lapsing balance, do you anticipate it carrying forward?
  - a. If yes, how do you propose to use that lapse?
  - b. Will it be for one-time expenses?
    - i. If so, what are those one-time expenses?
  - c. If ongoing expense is that expense built into this budget in FY 25?

the Governor's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget does not rely on any carryforwards of FY 2023 appropriations to fund ongoing operations, with the exception of OPM's Reserve for Salary Adjustment account.

APRA

1. Did you receive any ARPA funding in your department?
  - a. If yes, have you assumed the programs/staffing established with the ARPA funding is now in your General Fund budget as an ongoing expense?

ARPA funding allocated to DEEP will not require ongoing funding.

- i.If not all, how much?
- b. Are there still ARPA funds included in this budget?

Yes

- i.If yes, how much of this budget is continuation of ARPA funding?

Please see the attached spreadsheet “ARPA Status Report 3.3.23” for details on individual project status.

- ii.How much ARPA do you still have in the budget that may need to be picked up as ongoing expenses in out years?

This is a policy decision to be addressed by the Governor and Legislature as part of a future budget.

General Questions:

1. Is there anything you would change about this budget?
2. Is there anything you would add to this budget?
3. Is there anything you would remove from this budget?
4. Is there any legislation that was passed you feel you are not adequately prepared to enforce?
  - a. If so, what would we need to change to make it administer-able?

DEEP fully endorses the Governor's proposed budget recommendations, which aim to support the Department's core programs and provide additional funds and positions. These new resources will aid in the planning and implementation of the federal Inflation Reduction Act, which will allow Connecticut to take full advantage of the benefits offered by the programs in that legislation. The budget also includes provisions for enhancing black bear management and funding and positions to improve the visitor experience in our parks with a strong emphasis on safety, accessibility, and maintenance. Additionally, there is funding dedicated to improving equity and environmental justice initiatives, ensuring that all communities across Connecticut have access to the resources to mitigate and adapt to the worst impacts of climate change and can meaningfully participate in decisions that impact their health and environment. With these critical budget allocations, DEEP is poised to continue its important work of protecting Connecticut's environment and natural resources and ensuring access to clean, reliable, and affordable energy while also supporting the state's economic and social well-being.