

Public Hearing – February 11, 2020  
Appropriations Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Katie S. Dykes

### **Governor’s Recommended Budget Adjustments**

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, and Representative Lavielle, and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Governor Lamont’s proposed Fiscal Year 2020-21 Recommended Budget Adjustments for Connecticut’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

We support the Governor’s budget adjustments for DEEP, which include necessary investments in mosquito management and responding to the threats posed by PFAS combined with manageable reductions that will not compromise our core programs.

DEEP is organized into three branches in order to meet key priorities in protecting the environment and natural resources, bringing cleaner energy to the families and businesses of our state, and providing our residents with first-rate outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Governor proposes a net reduction to DEEP’s General Fund budget for FY ’21 of \$1.15 million, primarily achieved through the reduction of 17 authorized positions. This reduction in headcount is achieved by reassigning seven positions from the General Fund to the Passport to the Parks account, and transferring 11 positions from DEEP’s budget in conjunction with the statewide human resources consolidation. The Governor’s adjustments include the addition of one new position for Mosquito Management.

Governor Lamont’s budget adjustment recommendations also include:

- A \$301,000 reduction in the Emergency Spill Response Account to reflect historical expenditures.
- Realignment of \$200,000 from the Environmental Conservation Account to the Hatcheries Account.
- A reduction of four Public Utility Control (PUC) Fund positions, including the elimination of two vacancies and transferring two positions in conjunction with the statewide human resources consolidation.

***Important investments in combating mosquito-borne pathogens and “forever chemicals”***

Governor Lamont's budget adjustment recommendations respond to the threat of mosquito-borne pathogens. This threat became very real in 2019, with four cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in the state, which sadly resulted in three deaths. The DEEP Wetland Habitat and Mosquito Management Program assists cities, towns and health districts by providing technical advice on the best methods to manage and eradicate areas that encourage breeding mosquitos and conducts limited, targeted spraying for mosquito control in state forests and parks considered to be at high risk for EEE and West Nile Virus.

The \$302,008 increase in the Mosquito Control Account proposed by Governor Lamont will enable DEEP to add one additional staff person to the Wetland Habitat and Mosquito Management Program and fund additional larvicide for targeted spraying.

Governor Lamont's budget adjustment recommendations also provide for a more proactive response to the threats caused by the presence of PFAS in the environment. Consistent with the recommendations of the Governor's Working Group on PFAS, DEEP is committed to sampling surface water, groundwater, sediment, soil and aquatic organisms to begin to understand the extent of PFAS contamination in our environment. This work is an essential first step in minimizing risk to human health. The budget adjustment recommendation includes \$354,000 to help fund this work.

In conclusion, we strongly support the Governor's proposed budget adjustments, which preserve DEEP's core programs and provide new funds to combat emerging environmental and public health threats.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mandi Careathers, the Department's legislative liaison, at [Mandi.Careathers@ct.gov](mailto:Mandi.Careathers@ct.gov).