



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

MICHELLE H. SEAGULL | COMMISSIONER

Testimony of Michelle Seagull Commissioner of Consumer Protection

Appropriations Committee February 14, 2020

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Lavielle and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee, good morning, I am Michelle Seagull, Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP). Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Governor Lamont's proposed budget adjustments for DCP for the remainder biennium.

As I noted last year when testifying before you, over the last decade, DCP's regulatory scope has grown to include the medical marijuana program, the board of accountancy, registration of electronic nicotine delivery systems and vapor products, oversight of the cottage food industry, and expansion of the prescription monitoring program including mandatory look-up and other initiatives to combat the opioid epidemic with little or no additional resources until this biennium, when our overall budget was increased by 7 percent in FY 20 and an additional 5 percent in FY 21. This increase provided for three additional staff to address the increase in applications for the medical marijuana program, the growing challenges in the homemaker companion industry, and the implementation of cottage foods credentialing. Also included in DCP's budget for this biennium was \$97,000 to hire a durational project manager to write and navigate the application process for the importation of Canadian drugs through the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services. The drug importation bill did not receive final passage during the last session, so those funds have not been expended.

This year, the Governor's proposed budget adjustments include an additional \$275,362 in the DCP budget to allow for us to hire a durational project manager, a paralegal and an attorney to address the requirements contemplated in the Governor's Adult Use of Cannabis proposed legislation. This also includes a small adjustment for Other Expenses. The proposal also incorporates a reduction of \$152,589, an amount we submitted as a reduction option resulting from an unfilled position and other personal services cost saving measures. So, overall, this proposal increases DCP's budget for FY 21 by \$122,773.

DCP will continue to work to provide essential, core services in the most efficient, cost-effective way by focusing our resources on work that protects public health and safety and prevents significant economic harm to consumers and businesses.

We look forward to continuing our work with the Governor, our sister agencies and all of you here in the Legislative Branch to achieve these goals.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you this morning. I am proud of the hard work of DCP's employees and happy to answer any questions you may have.