



20BY26 RESULTS

FALL 2024 (JULY-SEPTEMBER)

TRANSPARENCY, PREDICTABILITY, AND EFFICIENCY

Commissioner's Introduction

In February 2024, DEEP launched the [20BY26 Initiative](#), setting 16 performance targets to achieve by the end of 2026 and asking for 4 additional goals from stakeholders, that will improve the transparency, predictability, and efficiency of DEEP programs. This initiative builds upon DEEP's previous, highly successful [20BY20 Initiative](#). We released our [first quarterly report](#) in August of this year.

As part of our commitment to transparency, I'm excited to share our Q3 report. I'd like to highlight some goals that saw great strides this quarter. In July 2024, we went to public notice for the [Release-Based Cleanup Regulations](#), the result of four years of hard work, including 50 Working Group meetings (Goal 1). These regulations, if adopted, will modernize pollution cleanup in Connecticut. Through Goal 18, a team has begun work to expand the eligibility for use of Dam Safety General Permits; this expansion will make it easier to repair or remove structures that pose a risk to public safety and fragment ecosystems in our state. And through our Goal 19 target of creating Community Resource Hubs to provide much needed services to and partnerships with Connecticut's overburdened communities, we began developing a draft Request for Qualifications reflecting initial conversations with community stakeholders (Goal 19).

I hope you enjoy reading about what DEEP does, and [please sign up](#) for 20BY26 updates and future reports.

Thank you!

Katie Dykes
Commissioner



Contents

20BY26 Goal 1 ADOPT RELEASE-BASED REGULATIONS TO MODERNIZE CONNECTICUT'S CLEANUP FRAMEWORK.....	5
20BY26 Goal 2 ACHIEVE 90% ON-TIME COMPLETION RATE FOR CRITICAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS	6
20BY26 Goal 3 REDUCE THE "LEGACY" PERMIT BACKLOG BY 65% BY 2026.....	8
20BY26 Goal 4 STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES.....	10
20BY26 Goal 5 EXPAND COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE	11
20BY26 Goal 6 ENHANCED FINANCIAL ASSURANCE TRACKING AND MANAGEMENT.....	12
20BY26 Goal 7 COLLABORATIVELY DEVELOP REGULATIONS THAT IMPLEMENT RECENT EJ REFORMS.....	13
20BY26 Goal 8 EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION FOR EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.....	15
20BY26 Goal 9 ENHANCED PUBLIC RECORDS TRANSPARENCY.....	16
20BY26 Goal 10 EXPAND TOOLS FOR ONLINE SERVICES.....	18
20BY26 Goal 11 SPEED UP GRANT AND CONTRACTING PROCESSES BY 50% FOR KEY GRANT PROGRAMS	19
20BY26 Goal 12 EXPAND DEEP CONCIERGE SERVICES TO MUNICIPALITIES AND SMALL BUSINESSES.....	20
20BY26 Goal 13 STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION WITH DEEP	21
20BY26 Goal 14 PERMITTING FOR DECARBONIZATION.....	23
20BY26 Goal 15 TOOLS FOR NAVIGATING AVAILABLE FEDERAL & STATE FUNDING.....	24
20BY26 Goal 16 DEEP PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE ENTITIES IN STATE PARKS.....	25
20BY26 Goal 17 IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF NDDDB REVIEW PROCESS	26
20BY26 Goal 18 ENHANCING DAM SAFETY THROUGH IMPROVED PERMITTING FOR REPAIR AND REMOVAL	27
20BY26 Goal 19 ESTABLISH EQUITY HUBS.....	28
20BY26 Goal 20 DEVELOP A METRICS DASHBOARD.....	29

Welcome to the next quarterly report on DEEP's 20BY26 Initiative.

For prior quarterly reports and other materials on this effort, please visit the [20BY26 website](#), and send all comments to DEEP.20BY26@ct.gov.

20BY26 GOAL 1:

ADOPT RELEASE-BASED REGULATIONS TO MODERNIZE CONNECTICUT’S CLEANUP FRAMEWORK

DEEP is developing, through **Goal 1**, new regulations that will ultimately replace the Property Transfer Act with a more effective and equitable release-based framework for cleaning up contaminated sites that is consistent with other states.

➤ In Previous Quarters

Thanks to the efforts of the Release-Based Working Group, DECD, DEEP staff, and other stakeholders, DEEP issued the draft regulations for 90-day public notice and comment on July 24, 2024.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

To ensure that the proposed regulation is clear for the various stakeholders, including those that could not frequently join the Working Group process, DEEP held and participated in various informational meetings, speaking engagements, and question and answer sessions (adding to the 50 Working Group meetings since the start of the regs development process). In this quarter, DEEP hosted 4 workshops and 7 presentations in August and September with:

- The Developer's Forum Home Builders Association
- Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce
- Connecticut Bar Association
- Middlesex Chamber of Commerce
- Board of Directors; Environmental Professionals Organization of Connecticut
- Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce
- Connecticut Business & Industry Association

➤ Up Next:

The 90-day public comment period for the draft Release-Based Regulations ended on October 24, 2024. DEEP will consider and incorporate suggested improvements from stakeholders into the proposed regulations. DEEP will meet with the Release-Based Working Group monthly until the regulations are adopted.



ACHIEVE 90% ON-TIME COMPLETION RATE FOR CRITICAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS

For Goal 2, DEEP is working towards a 90% on-time completion rate for permit applications that have a 3-month expected completion timeframe (55 permit types covered). DEEP is also striving for an 80% on-time completion rate for permit applications that have 6- or 12-month expected completion timeframes.

➤ In Previous Quarters

DEEP aligned state permit processing timeframes with federal statutory timeframes. We also analyzed our Permitting Timeframes Dashboard to find that 3 of 7 permitting divisions are processing as many applications as they are receiving and to gain more insight into processing challenges and solutions.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

Across the board in Q2 2024, all 7 permitting divisions processed as many applications as they received in at least one of the three timeframe categories. As the table below shows, between Q1 and Q2 of 2024, the number of divisions that met the 90% goal for the 3-month timeframe increased from 1 to 3. The percentage processed in 6- and 12-month timeframes improved as well, as programs cleaned up data and made the following changes:

- The Land and Water Resources Division (LWRD) reassessed regulatory tools for coastal permitting to improve on-time processing. LWRD met on July 10, 2024 with environmental consultant stakeholders to collaborate on possible solutions.
- The Water Permitting and Enforcement Division (WPED) evaluated permit application data across 5 data platforms to ensure accuracy and identify data gaps. The team identified software constraints and found construction stormwater solar projects past the 3-month processing target in cases where the applicant had not yet submitted financial assurance instruments.
- WPED reissued the Swimming Pool General Permit on August 1, 2024. This permit allows an operator to follow the permit without going through a lengthier individual permitting process. This National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) GP covers dischargers with similar operations and is issued to no one in particular, provided the discharger's actions are consistent with the permit requirements.

Up Next:

DEEP will analyze Q3 2024 permit data to continue to gain insights for process improvement. LWRD will review stakeholder-suggested process improvements and hold a follow-up event in Q4 2024 to go over the implemented improvements to the coastal regulatory programs. WPED and IT will identify solutions for software roadblocks to ensure timely, accurate data in accordance with standard operating procedures.

PERCENTAGE OF PERMITS COMPLETED WITHIN EXPECTED 3-, 6-, AND 12-MONTH TIMEFRAMES BY DIVISION IN SECOND QUARTER OF 2024

Timeframe (months)	3	6	12
AIR (Air Engineering)	50 ▼	27 ▼	17 ▲
ERSP (Emergency Response & Spill Prevention)	100 ▲	NA	NA
LWRD (Land & Water Resources)	94 ▲	63 ▲	61 ▲
REMED (Remediation)	100 ▲	NA	none due
WEED (Waste Engineering & Enforcement)	38 ▼	none due	0 ▼
WPED (Water Permitting & Enforcement)	60 ▼	93 ▲	29 ▲
WPMD (Water Planning & Management)	71 ▲	38 ▼	none due

NA = Not applicable because no permits exist in that column for this division’s programs

Darkest shading = 80% or higher completion

Medium = 50-79% completion

Light = 49% or below completion quarters, as the more complete table on our permitting dashboard shows.

Arrow direction indicates whether the percentage has increased ▲ or decreased ▼ since the previous quarter.



20BY26 GOAL 3:

REDUCE THE “LEGACY” PERMIT BACKLOG BY 65% BY 2026

DEEP’s **Goal 3** seeks to reduce the number of pending legacy permit applications by 65% by the end of 2026. Legacy permit applications are ones that remain unresolved more than five years beyond estimated permit processing timeframes.

➤ In Previous Quarters

DEEP updated the universe of legacy applications, adding those from 2017 and 2018 for a total of 507. Even with this update DEEP increased the reduction of legacy permits to 69%, or 348 of 507 permits.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

DEEP is holding steady at 69%, or 352 of 507, legacy permit applications processed. The following improvements reflect the crucial balance of processing incoming applications to minimize additions to the legacy universe, while addressing older applications:

- LWRD closely analyzed pending legacy application metrics and discovered trends, indicating an updated permit processing standard operating procedure could resolve many of these older applications.
- WPED developed a pending applications report to expand its project management toolbox and ensure teams are prioritizing timely disposition. The Pretreatment Program successfully issued 50% of the legacy Significant Industrial User wastewater general permit applications ahead of the target goal and resolved several high profile surface water and groundwater legacy applications. Lastly, WPED developed FFY25 program-specific plans targeted to reduce the legacy backlog.

➤ Up Next:

- LWRD will refine standard operating procedures to create a clear framework for staff data entry and requests for information from permit applicants. LWRD will hold a stakeholder engagement meeting to receive input on new processes.
- WPED's Pretreatment Program will make permitting decisions for the remaining Significant Industrial User wastewater general permit applications by February 2025.
- DEEP will continue processing pending legacy applications alongside new ones.

STATUS OF LEGACY PERMIT APPLICATIONS

	pre- 1/1/2017	1/1/2017- 12/31/2017	1/1/2018- 12/31/2018	Totals
# Legacy permits	331	60	116	507*
# Processed as of 3/31/24	223 (67%)	41 (68%)	84 (72%)	348 (69%)
# Processed as of 06/30/24	225 (68%)	41 (68%)	86 (72%)	352 (69%)
# Remaining as of 06/30/24	106	19	30	155

* The number of legacy permits is 507, not 517 as stated in the February 2024 kick off report.



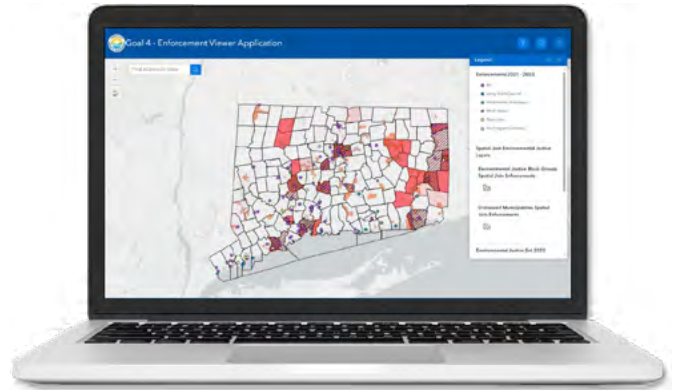
20BY26 GOAL 4:

STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES

Goal 4 of 20BY26 sets targets to increase consistency and transparency in enforcement programs across DEEP and to incorporate equity and environmental justice into decision-making. Since announcing this initiative, DEEP has deployed new tools to strengthen our enforcement programs:

🔑 In Previous Quarters

Leveraging ArcGIS Online application creation tools, DEEP created the [Enforcement Viewer Application](#) for public transparency in locating formal enforcement actions across the state. DEEP also concluded its Geospatial Measurement of Air Pollution (GMAP) tour in Hartford/East Hartford.



🔑 What We Did This Quarter

- WPED published a list of all [Significant Industrial Users discharging wastewater who are in significant noncompliance](#) with federal standards during federal FY2023 (10/1/22 to 9/30/23).
- LWRD's internal workgroup that is focused on updating permitting documents collaborated with LWRD's enforcement unit to define special conditions in licenses that can address typical violations that are found during construction, giving permittees more clarity and reducing the number of violations.
- The Water Planning and Management Division (WPMD) hired an enforcement coordinator for the first time for the Municipal Wastewater and Dam Safety Permitting programs.

🔑 Up Next:

Staff will add a dataset to the [Enforcement Viewer](#) that aggregates reported complaints resulting in DEEP inspections. DEEP's Air Bureau also will share [GMAP](#) monitoring data on the dedicated webpage, so the public can view areas of increased air pollution and DEEP can use this information to inspect for compliance. DEEP programs will share the top ten common violations and how to come into compliance.

20BY26 GOAL 5:

EXPAND COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE

In Goal 5, DEEP is developing additional tools and providing greater compliance assistance in sectors with higher non-compliance.

In Previous Quarters

DEEP created new compliance tools to help meet this challenge. DEEP converted traditional phone and email-based public complaint systems to [digital surveys](#) through ArcGIS Online's Survey123 to streamline public engagement and reduce the staff time needed to address the complaints. DEEP published major guidance on [Stormwater](#) and [coastal activities](#) in Spring 2024.

What We Did This Quarter

- DEEP started using Power Automate to connect our Survey123 complaint intake systems to automatically and simultaneously send response emails to those who submit and to DEEP's record retention locations.
- As part of its ongoing assessment of feedback from the MS4 Technical Workshops hosted in Spring 2024, WPED identified and prioritized fundamental components of the MS4 Program allowing the team to develop a Targeted Compliance Assistance Plan for the regulated community.
- Waste Engineering and Enforcement Division (WEED) launched an inspection protocol for commercial food scrap generators to determine if their operations trigger the [Commercial Organics Law](#) (CGS Section 22a-226e). WEED sent letters to generators in July 2024 to let them know that compliance assistance checks would begin on August 26, 2024.

Up Next:

- DEEP will create complaint systems for additional programs, such as the Emergency Response & Spill Prevention Division, standardizing the processing of public complaints agency-wide.
- LWRD will host a [Beach Association Guide](#) stakeholder meeting at Fort Trumbull, New London in October 2024. This is in follow-up to the Guide and will occur annually to directly reach stakeholders and increase compliance.
- WPED will refine the Targeted Compliance Assistance Plan and share a draft with stakeholders to solicit feedback. WPED will use data from annual reports to generate a list of facilities that need compliance inspections and assistance with how to comply.

20BY26 GOAL 6:

ENHANCED FINANCIAL ASSURANCE TRACKING AND MANAGEMENT

Goal 6 of 20BY26 concentrates efforts on strengthening our financial assurance management, which applies to money held in trust to address failed remedies or unfulfilled permitted actions. Fourteen programs across DEEP use financial assurance mechanisms, similar to the ones that are required to be used for RCRA programs.

In Previous Quarters

DEEP formalized an internal standard operating procedure to guide staff on the proper management of financial assurance.

What We Did This Quarter

DEEP continued reviewing financial instruments for standardization across programs and worked to establish an agency-wide tracking database.

Up Next:

DEEP will continue to develop our agency database and house financial assurance instruments on a centralized webpage for use by all programs.

DEEP PROGRAMS USING FINANCIAL ASSURANCE



Federal - Hazardous Waste

- RCRA Corrective Action
- RCRA Unit Closure
- RCRA Operating Facilities



Waste

- CT Regulated Waste Facilities (CGS 454)
- Solid Waste Facilities
- Landfills



Remediation

- Engineered Controls
- Stewardship Permits
- Landfills



Environmental Quality

- Stormwater
- Marine cables
- Underground storage tanks



Environmental Conservation

- Land Acquisition and Management
- Fisheries
- Forestry

COLLABORATIVELY DEVELOP REGULATIONS THAT IMPLEMENT RECENT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE REFORMS

Goal 7 of 20BY26 reinforces our commitment to Environmental Justice (EJ) by guiding DEEP’s work drafting regulations to implement the Legislature’s mandates in [Public Act 23-202](#). This statute increased the public participation requirements for applications for DEEP permits and, for the first time, authorized the Commissioner to consider the cumulative impact of existing health and environmental stressors in an EJ community when evaluating certain permit applications. DEEP will engage community members from the outset of regulations development, resulting in a new set of rules to protect our most vulnerable communities.

➤ In Previous Quarters

DEEP held informational sessions for stakeholders groups to introduce the rulemaking process, timeline, underlying EJ framework, and need for the EJ regulations. DEEP partnered with Save the Sound and local EJ advocates to set up an Advocates Task Force.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

DEEP hosted 12 stakeholder sessions on the history of the EJ Law in CT and key regulatory concepts with a timeline for development, including our latest meeting with the Commission on Racial Equity and Public Health. In September 2024, DEEP hosted the official kickoff meeting for regulations development, which was well-attended by 90 participants. We also launched a Campaign Monitor [subscription email list](#) for EJ and published a [webpage for regulations development](#) materials and schedule, and a contact email address, DEEP.EJrulemaking@ct.gov. DEEP also released a Request for Proposals (RFP) that closed at the end of September for a consultant to develop a cumulative impacts assessment tool to help industry comply with the upcoming new regulations.

➤ Up Next:

DEEP will review the bids from the RFP and announce the vendor. We will put out an open call to convene a regulated industry working group to assist in the development of the EJ Regulations.

EJ REGULATIONS DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



ORIENTATION

Informational and listening sessions



CONCEPTS

Six stakeholder meetings:
Introduction,
Four concepts meetings,
Conclusion



LANGUAGE

Presentation of draft language



COMMENT

Public comment period



HEARING

Public hearing

2024

2025



20BY26 GOAL 8:

EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION FOR EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Goal 8 challenges DEEP to learn from and incorporate all communities in its mission. This goal commits DEEP to developing tools to increase the awareness and accessibility of information about what meaningful public participation is, in accordance with Connecticut’s Environmental Justice Law’s (EJ Law), and how to get involved in the permitting process.

🔑 In Previous Quarters

DEEP’s Office of Equity and Environmental Justice, along with its permitting and programmatic partners, created new [guidance](#) on public participation requirements in CT’s EJ Law and a webpage on how to [participate in the permitting process](#).



🔑 What We Did This Quarter

DEEP digitized all EJ public participation plans, reports, and Community Environmental Benefit Agreements produced pursuant to [CGS section 22a-20a](#) and developed a tracking protocol for these documents. DEEP is working to develop a public guide to state and federal definitions relevant to EJ Communities. This guide will offer greater clarity on who is covered by various programs and incentives.

🔑 Up Next:

DEEP will make the digitized EJ documents publicly accessible on [its website](#). DEEP will refresh its standard operating procedures on how the EJ Office coordinates with permitting programs in accordance with the EJ Law and will update online information about recent legislative changes to the [Distressed Municipality category](#) that extended the eligibility for residents for certain programs and grants. DEEP is planning a December 2024 stakeholder workshop for EJ rulemaking that will cover the topic of public participation.

20BY26 GOAL 9:

ENHANCED PUBLIC RECORDS TRANSPARENCY

Goal 9 sets out a strategic vision for modernizing DEEP’s record management and integrating this system with other IT systems through new online tools to access files and through map viewers.

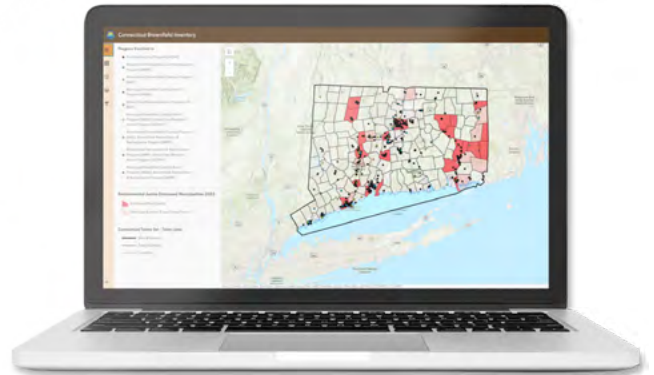
➤ In Previous Quarters

DEEP’s new [Online Document Search Portal](#) went live with a short [instructional video](#); we updated the land surveyor submission criteria to include GIS-based property layers for faster integration with the [DEEP-owned properties layer](#); we updated the [Freedom of Information Act webpage](#); and the State Emergency Response Commission released a new [map viewer](#).

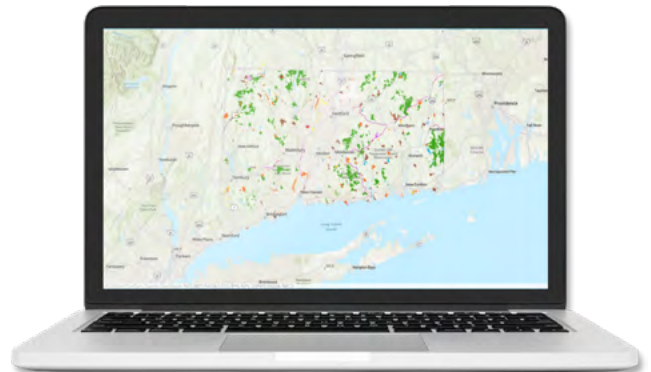
➤ What We Did This Quarter

DEEP’s Property Layer has been accessed 435,757 times via our [GIS Open Data Hub](#) this quarter; the [EPCRA-LEPC Application](#) received 630 views since its release in February; and the [Brownfield Inventory Application](#) has received 280 views since the beginning of the year.

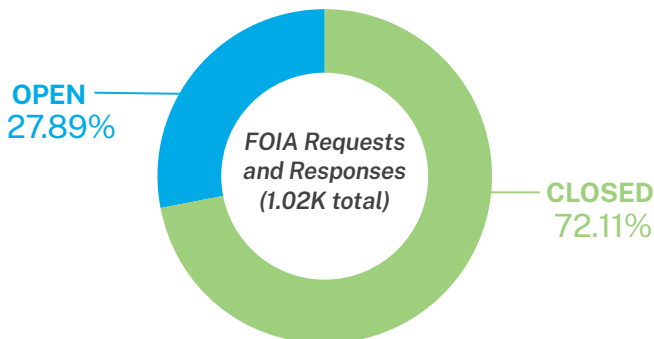
DEEP received close to 1,000 Freedom of Information Act requests by Q3 2024, of which 72% have been fulfilled. Over 500 requests were received in Q3 alone. Reports for emergency response unit documents are the most requested. These documents can actually be found directly by the requestor on our Online Documents Search Portal without going through the FOIA process.



Connecticut Brownfields Inventory Viewer



DEEP's Property Layer Map



Up Next:

As discussed in Goal 8, a contractor will be selected to create a new cumulative impacts tool. The contractor will also be updating Connecticut's Environmental Justice Screening Tool, creating a version 3.0; we currently are on [version 2.0](#). DEEP will begin training FOIA liaisons throughout the agency on the GovQA platform.



20BY26 GOAL 10:

EXPAND TOOLS FOR ONLINE SERVICES

Building off DEEP’s Goal 9 work to enhance access to public records, DEEP’s strategic IT vision in Goal 10 focuses on developing more sophisticated and efficient IT systems to improve the functionality, both internally and externally, for critical programs. These innovations will help us better manage data management for pollution release areas, process e-payments for fees, receive documents from the public, and allow the e-filing of permits, all on one platform.

➤ In Previous Quarters

DEEP and BITS identified activities for electronic payments and tracking of release cleanup cases. We began refining the processes to register users on the online platform to allow document and payment submittals.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

DEEP and BITS documented hundreds of functional and technical features to be included in the new online tracking system, which we named "Release, Environmental Assessment, & Cleanup Tracker (REACT)." We identified example documents and applicable regulations and statutes, and we inventoried GIS map layers that will be integrated into the system. We completed three development cycles (sprints) that included 70 user stories to test and build the system. We then identified requirements and initiated data migration tasks to integrate our existing data management system with the new platform.

➤ Up Next:

DEEP and BITS will continue construction of REACT and electronic payment platforms. DEEP will also start the discovery and design process for a stormwater electronic permitting platform.

IT PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



SPEED UP GRANT AND CONTRACTING PROCESSES BY 50% FOR KEY GRANT PROGRAMS

In Goal 11, DEEP is speeding up key grant and contracting processes that it controls. DEEP administers roughly 35 individual grant programs from 14 different federal agencies totaling more than \$365 million and counting. These funds support agency operations and pass-through contracts to nonprofits, municipalities, and other grantees.

➤ In Previous Quarters

DEEP deployed an agency-wide contracting planner board, developed legal contract templates for individual grant programs, and conducted training to map the contracting process for staff and speed contract drafting.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

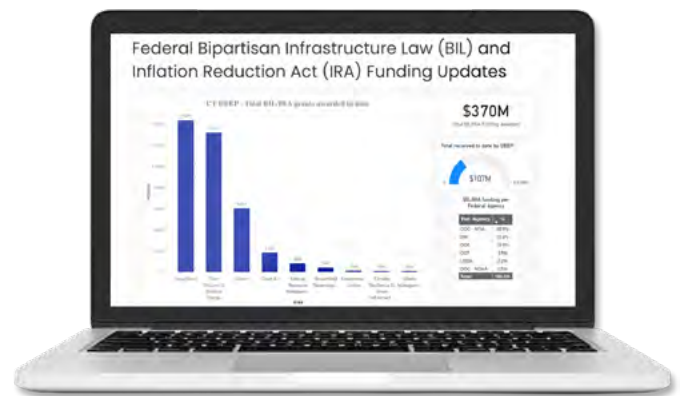
DEEP welcomed a Federal Grants Policy Advisor, who coordinates grant efforts, informs the public of funding opportunities, and provides guidance to potential grant applicants, as well as two Grants & Contract Specialists, who are responsible for the planning, implementation, and management of complex grant programs in DEEP's Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy (BETP).

DEEP established a tracking baseline of "award letter to final contract signing" to calculate metrics for this goal. Additionally, we are analyzing various contract management systems, and BETP is field-testing a new "application to fulfillment" grant management tool through Amplifund with the acceptance of applications for broadband access. On August 23, 2024, 121 participants attended DEEP's Opportunities for Funding Connecticut Communities webinar.

➤ Up Next:

DEEP will develop a tool for applicants to search grant opportunities on DEEP's Grants & Financial Assistance webpage, followed by an introductory webinar on DEEP grant applications that will be recorded for continued use.

Soon DEEP will share baseline data on grant contracting timeframes.



20BY26 GOAL 12:

EXPAND DEEP CONCIERGE SERVICES TO MUNICIPALITIES AND SMALL BUSINESSES

In Goal 12, DEEP is broadening its Client Concierge Services to municipalities and small businesses through enhanced permit assistance, tools for smoother project implementation, better communication, and more information about relevant funding opportunities.

🔑 In Previous Quarters

DEEP's [Municipal Team](#) began providing tailored services to municipalities through the launch of the new [Municipal Hub webpage](#), [Early Municipal Assistance Program](#), and [Municipal Connections newsletter](#) and email updates.

🔑 What We Did This Quarter

The Municipal Team coordinated with the Bureau of Information Technology Solutions (BITS) to launch an internal customer relationship management database solution to track municipal correspondence and inquiries, pre-application projects, Concierge projects, and environmental review projects.

The team issued a Municipal Connections newsletter on the Bear Toolkit in September and sent municipal update emails with grant opportunities, announcements, events, and public comment opportunities approximately biweekly to 1,140 recipients, with an average open rate of 42% and a 11.5% click rate. DEEP now has an [archive webpage](#) for all past editions of the Municipal Connections newsletter.

IPP also began to hold [Early Municipal Assistance](#) meetings, bringing together municipal and DEEP permitting and grant staff to discuss prospective projects and provide guidance on potential regulatory requirements and funding opportunities.

🔑 Up Next:

DEEP will create Municipal Connections Newsletter editions themed to Dam Safety and Road Salt. Also on the horizon is an updated Municipal Primer, and more ways to connect small businesses with permit assistance, compliance assistance, and funding opportunities. Please contact us anytime at DEEP.Concierge@ct.gov and subscribe to our [permit updates](#) and [municipal news](#).

DEEP'S MUNICIPAL TEAM



20BY26 GOAL 13:

STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION WITH DEEP

Through **Goal 13**, DEEP is deepening its engagement with stakeholders, with a focus on inclusivity and equity. Enhanced outreach and partnerships are fundamental to DEEP's success in serving its mission.

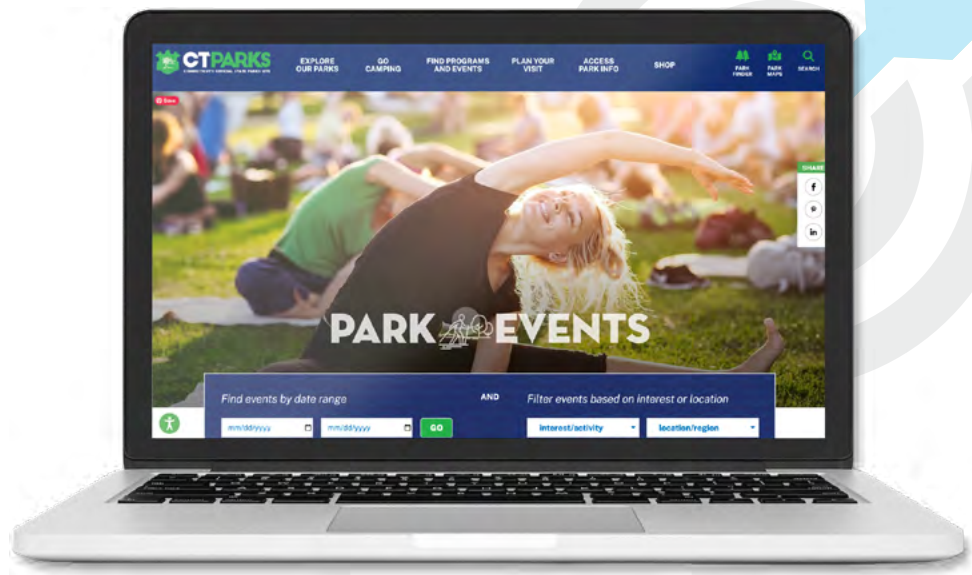
🔑 In Previous Quarters

DEEP updated its [Contacts Webpage](#) for faster assistance and set up a new email marketing and public awareness platform with Campaign Monitor for better flow of targeted information. DEEP engaged thousands of stakeholders for feedback on the [Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#), the [State Wildlife Action Plan \(SWAP\)](#), and [Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment](#).

🔑 What We Did This Quarter

- DEEP hosted an Open House for the Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse with 8 informational posters on topics ranging from Stream Flow to Brownfields and lots of great conversations with consultants, municipal officials, and environmental attorneys, as well as DEEP staff from other bureaus.

- DEEP's new [State Parks calendar](#) is up and running on the State Parks website, which is growing in features and functionality.



- DEEP started an all-terrain wheelchair program at 5 State Parks and Forests - [Dinosaur State Park](#), Rocky Hill; [Gillette Castle State Park](#), East Haddam; [Harkness Memorial State Park](#), Waterford; [Rocky Neck State Park](#), Niantic; and [Topsmead State Forest](#), Litchfield –using Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. On Sept 23, 2024, Dinosaur State Park hosted an all-terrain wheelchair event, and DEEP made a [training video](#) with trail maps for the public. Expansion of equitable and sustainable access to Connecticut State Parks and Forests is an ongoing DEEP priority.
- Stakeholder surveys closed on the [Connecticut's State Wildlife Action Plan](#) (SWAP).
- DEEP, in collaboration with its partners at the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), developed a [listing of all available broadband programs](#) across all state agencies.
- DEEP now has an internal Language Bank application for staff to provide language support during agency outreach as part of improving Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in communications with stakeholders.
- We have also made significant improvements in communications with Campaign Monitor, transitioning or decommissioning over 50% of our newsletters and e-mail lists to consolidate [communications on one platform](#) for greater effectiveness, efficiency, and flexibility.



➔ Up Next:

DEEP will launch a Conservation Action Tracker for the SWAP and establish a quarterly newsletter. DEEP will soon unveil CTDEEP.News, a modern, news-style site for accessible and up-to-date information on our work and environmental issues. DEEP is planning an agency-wide Innovation Fair this Fall; stay tuned for further details!

20BY26 GOAL 14:

PERMITTING FOR DECARBONIZATION

In Goal 14, DEEP is exploring and implementing best practices to streamline renewable energy permitting and maximize investments in critical decarbonization efforts, including to meet decarbonation goals and follow plans, such as DEEP's 2021 Integrated Resources Plan.


In Previous Quarters


DEEP assessed the challenges associated with site development for solar energy generation and created a hierarchy of siting considerations for developers, which will be fundamental for projects to smoothly navigate the regulatory process. This hierarchy will be incorporated in future [Sustainable, Transparent, and Efficient Practices for Solar \(STEPS\)](#) siting guidance.


What We Did This Quarter


- In July, DEEP co-hosted a regional permitting for decarbonization workshop with the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO), featuring energy and environmental representatives from New England states, New York, and New Jersey. We are working with ECOS and NASEO to make a series of workshops on this topic going forward.
- DEEP also held the first meeting of [Community Renewable Energy Siting Tool \(CREST\)](#) Collaborative on October 2, 2024 to bring together representatives from 25 organizations (municipal, conservation, farmland, solar developers, climate advocates, etc.) to advise DEEP and UCONN-CLEAR on the development of a renewable energy siting map, pursuant to [PA 24-31](#) (Sec. 5).
- BETP participated in a working group led by CT Green Bank on decommissioning and disposal of batteries for energy storage and photovoltaic panels.
- Pursuant to [PA 24-144](#) (Sec. 12), DEEP began, with partner agencies, a study of the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC), received 65 public scoping comments, and set a public comment meeting for November 21 ([register here](#)).

VISION FOR CREST AND SITING RENEWABLE ENERGY

 Further Connecticut's clean energy goals - full decarbonization by 2040.

 Enable a more transparent and efficient siting and permitting process.

 Conserve Connecticut's environmental resources equitably in all communities.

 Provide a tool with publicly available data that leads to **the 3 goals** above.

Up Next:

- DEEP will deliver the Final CSC Study to the Connecticut General Assembly on or before December 31, 2024.
- DEEP will create a beta version of CREST, leveraging ArcGIS Online to publish an interactive application with layers identified as integral to siting future solar projects within the state. CREST will be presented at the next Collaborative meeting for their feedback and tool improvement.

20BY26 GOAL 15:

TOOLS FOR NAVIGATING AVAILABLE FEDERAL & STATE FUNDING

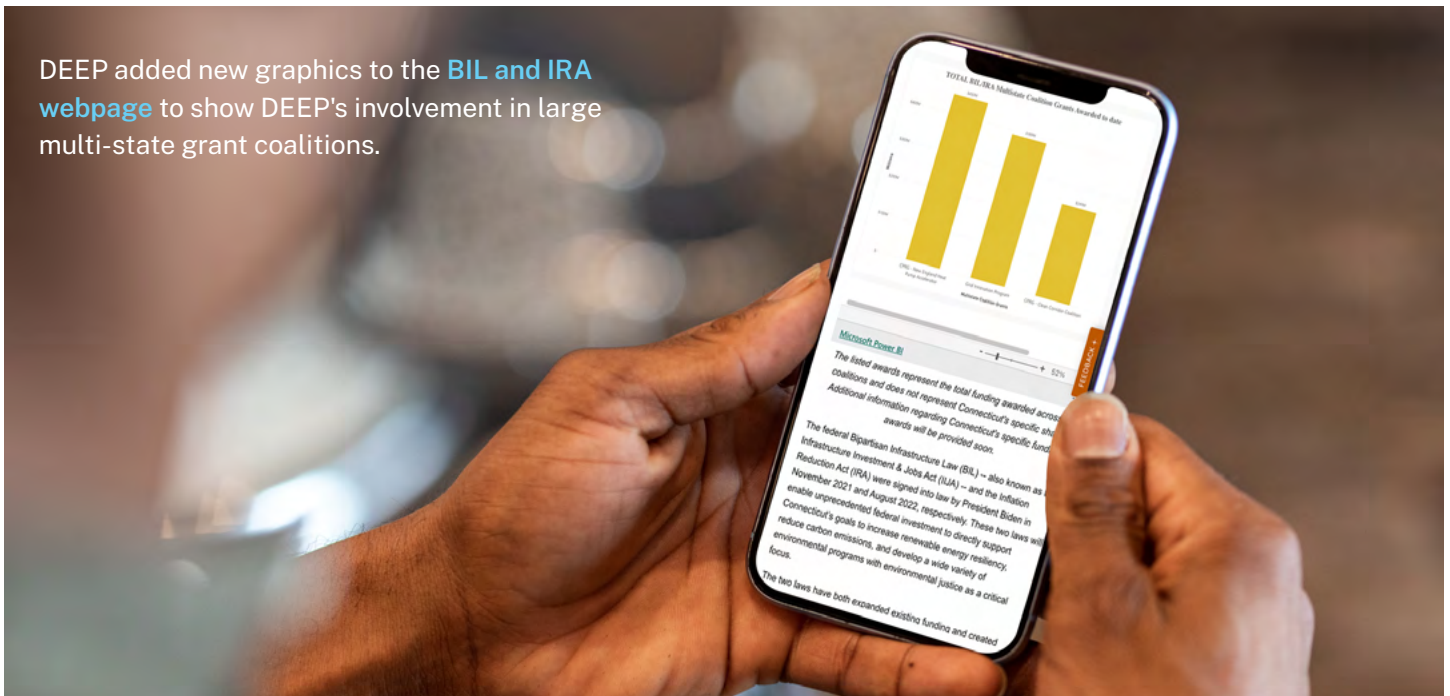
In Goal 15, DEEP is focused on leveraging vital federal and state incentives and funding to expand clean energy, energy efficiency, broadband, and reduction of greenhouse gases, among other environmental priorities, and sharing this information broadly with residents and businesses.

🔑 In Previous Quarters

DEEP launched its [online transparency dashboard](#) for over \$360 million in BIL and IRA funds.

🔑 What We Did This Quarter

DEEP added new graphics to the [BIL and IRA webpage](#) to show DEEP's involvement in large multi-state grant coalitions.



🔑 Up Next:

DEEP is developing a tool for applicants to search grant opportunities on our [Grants & Financial Assistance webpage](#) (see coordination with Goal 11). We also will continue working with interested stakeholders to develop a tool that will more easily connect applicants (nonprofits, municipalities, tribes, residents, and others) with the available state, local, and federal energy and broadband incentives and funding opportunities.

20BY26 GOAL 16:

DEEP PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE ENTITIES IN STATE PARKS

In Goal 16, DEEP aims to build upon existing private sector partnerships to further elevate outdoor recreation experiences, enhance tourism destinations, provide equitable access to State Parks, and support Connecticut’s growing outdoor recreation economy – which is the second largest in New England.

➤ In Previous Quarters

Following the early 2024 launch of its new [Office of Outdoor Industry & Experience](#), DEEP issued its Partnership in Parks Request for Information (RFI) for public engagement and feedback, and received 45 concepts by the submission deadline.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

DEEP continued to welcome responses to the RFI on a rolling basis and received 3 additional concepts, began evaluating all concepts received, and refilled the State Parks Special Use Licenses Coordinator position to support Partnerships in Parks. DEEP has since issued 3 Special Use Licenses for new activities specifically for this initiative, including watercraft rentals at Squantz Pond and West Rock Ridge State Parks.

In sum, 120 Special Use Licenses have been granted to community groups to utilize our state parks this year, and executed licenses for 33 events in Q3 alone. This is more than any other past year.

➤ Up Next:

DEEP will focus on in-depth review of the high impact concepts submitted to the RFI and will plan out requests for proposals for concepts in line with current park activities, such as meeting our goals for concessions operations at state parks.



IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF NDDB REVIEW

DEEP's **Goal 17** aims at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) review process for all stakeholders. NDDB review is a core component of DEEP's approach to ensuring state permitted activities do not produce adverse effects for rare and imperiled plant and animal species. The complexity of NDDB review and reliance on external parties to complete necessary steps in the process can, at times, result in extended review timelines. This goal seeks to identify additional resources and process improvements that may reduce review timelines and help external parties better understand the process.

➤ In Previous Quarters

This new goal is based on stakeholder suggestions and was launched in August 2024.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

DEEP assembled a goal team to lead this process improvement effort, and the team began identifying capacity-and process-related factors affecting the efficiency of programmatic review. For example, aquatic pesticide reviews - approximately 75 received annually - present a particular challenge without an aquatic botanist on staff because researching new herbicides and their impacts is complex and rapidly evolving and requires existing terrestrial botanist staff to stay abreast of the most current information and process these reviews in a timely manner. Having a dedicated NDDB email enables efficient communication with the public and provides staff centralized access to communication records, but managing the high volume of emails is challenging.



Aquatic Invasives

➤ Up Next:

DEEP will continue its assessment of areas where process improvements may be beneficial and within programmatic control. The team will begin to prioritize and assess key programmatic needs and barriers to overcome in meeting the process improvement target.

ENHANCING DAM SAFETY THROUGH IMPROVED PERMITTING FOR REPAIR AND REMOVAL

Connecticut hosts the highest number of dams per river mile in the country, most of which are privately owned and many of which serve an important role for water supply, recreation, energy production, or multiple beneficial uses. **Goal 18** focuses on improving and expanding permitting and guidance for public safety and environmental benefit relating to dams.

🔑 In Previous Quarters

This new goal is based on stakeholder suggestions and was launched in August 2024.

🔑 What We Did This Quarter

DEEP's Dam Safety (DS) Program began considering expansion of eligible activities under three **General Permits** (GPs) - GP-014, GP-015, and GP-016 - which expire on October 1, 2025. This expansion will allow the GPs to cover more activities and be easier to implement. DEEP presented on permit assistance and the DS program framework and solicited proposed updates to the GPs at the Connecticut Water Works Association meeting on September 5, 2024. DS issued 19 notices of non-compliance in August 2024 to Class B (Significant Hazard Potential) dam owners missing Emergency Action Plans. Notices of Violation will be issued to owners who fail to submit EAPs.



🔑 Up Next:

DEEP will gather an advisory committee of industry professionals to collect recommendations on improving dam safety general permits and guidance on sediment management. Our Dam Safety team is accepting ideas for permit improvement at Dam.Safety@ct.gov. DEEP is preparing an internal kaizen event to streamline the consultation process for Individual Dam Safety Permits with other DEEP programs and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

20BY26 GOAL 19:

ESTABLISH COMMUNITY RESOURCE HUBS

Through **Goal 19** of 20BY26, DEEP will establish Community Resource Hubs, also known as Equity Hubs, by partnering, through multi-year contracts, with qualified organizations to serve in Environmental Justice (EJ) communities across the state, whether urban or rural. This initiative is part of DEEP's broader mission of ensuring equitable access to environmental and energy programs, grants, and services, particularly in communities historically overburdened by environmental challenges.

➤ In Previous Quarters

This new goal is based on stakeholder suggestions and was launched in August 2024, reflecting stakeholder priorities.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

DEEP developed a short concept paper to capture the goals of the Hubs and potential services they could provide and began developing a draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to be released for extensive stakeholder comment and engagement before being finalized. The Hubs concept was presented to the Connecticut Equity & Environmental Justice Advisory Council ([CEEJAC](#)) in June 2024.

➤ Up Next:

DEEP will release the draft RFQ on [this webpage](#), and will hold public information sessions on the draft RFQ in two sessions on November 7. Public feedback will be welcomed through November 28, and the final RFQ should be released in December 2024, with responses due in early 2025. Stay tuned as we continue to develop this initiative, register for the public information sessions, and please email if you have additional ideas at DEEP.EJ@ct.gov.



20BY26 GOAL 20:

DEVELOP A METRICS DASHBOARD

Goal 20 in 20BY26 will make DEEP’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and reach the state’s carbon reduction goals by 2040 more transparent with a new Metrics Dashboard.

➤ In Previous Quarters

This new goal is based on stakeholder suggestions and was launched in August 2024, reflecting stakeholder priorities.

➤ What We Did This Quarter

DEEP identified around 20 potential datasets in the categories of waste, energy, water, air, and conservation from across our agency. We began two pilot dashboards using Power BI, with data from the 2022 Annual Solid Waste Report and renewable energy technology deployment in Connecticut.

➤ Up Next:

DEEP will deploy the two pilot dashboards and create a framework that will translate to other Bureaus.

Category/Topic	STEP 1 Gather Data	STEP 2 Create Dashboard	STEP 3 Deploy Power BI	STEP 4 Conduct Outreach
Waste/ 2022 Solid Waste Pilot	✓			
Energy / Renewable Technology Deployment Pilot	✓			
More to Come!				



**Connecticut Department of Energy &
Environmental Protection**

portal.ct.gov/DEEP

Please go to our [20BY26 website](#) to read our [launch report](#) and past quarterly reports. And [sign up](#) to receive email updates on the 20BY26 Initiative. You also can always reach us at DEEP.20BY26@ct.gov.