



Agency Legislative Proposal

2026 Session

General Information

Agency	Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection
Proposal Name	Energy Affordability
Legislative Liaison	Megan Andrews Legislative Liaison Megan.M.Andrews@ct.gov
	Harrison Nantz Deputy Chief of Staff Harrison.Nantz@ct.gov
Division Requesting Proposal	Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy, Office of Climate Planning
Drafter	Kristin Gadarowski, Rebecca French, Becca Trietch, Josh Walters, Jeff Semancik, Annie Decker

Overview

Brief Summary of Proposal

This proposal builds on the work of the Department and the Lamont administration in helping find policy solutions to reduce rates for Connecticut ratepayers through a number of pathways, including efficiency measures, proactive transmission planning, and reducing the cost of zero carbon energy sources.

What problem is this proposal looking to solve?

Connecticut residents and businesses are seeking ways to lower their utility bills.

How does the proposal solve the problem?

This proposal provides a handful of policy options that would bring energy cost savings to Connecticut ratepayers.

Section by section summary:

Section #(s)	Section Summary
1	<p>The purpose of this section is to enable Connecticut to work with a third-party entity and to coordinate with other states to continue, to the maximum extent feasible, a regional equivalent to the EPA ENERGY STAR® program, in the event that program ends. A CT energy star program would allow, to the maximum extent possible, the continued energy cost savings that residential and commercial buildings and industry enjoy through the option to buy ENERGY STAR® appliance and/or certify their buildings, and industrial processes meet ENERGY STAR® standards.</p> <p>While DEEP's preference is that the ENERGY STAR® program continue at the US EPA and be fully funded, the federal government is reportedly considering ending the EPA Energy Star program.</p> <p>ENERGY STAR® is administered by the U.S. EPA as the federal government-backed symbol for energy efficiency. The blue ENERGY STAR label provides simple, credible, and unbiased information that consumers and businesses rely on to make well-informed decisions. Thousands of organizations—including nearly 40% of the Fortune 500®—partner with ENERGY STAR. Together with EPA, they deliver cost-saving energy efficiency solutions that protect the environment, improve air quality, and protect public health. Since 1992, ENERGY STAR and its partners have helped American families and businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Save 5 trillion kilowatt-hours of electricity.• Avoid more than \$500 billion in energy costs. <p>Achieve 4 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions reductions.</p> <p>Connecticut's ratepayers have benefited significantly from the EPA ENERGY STAR program. The EnergizeCT program was recognized 8 consecutive years in a row from 2016-2023 with the Partner of the Year award by EPA ENERGY STAR. In 2023, EnergizeCT was recognized for the following accomplishments:</p>

- Customers redeemed more than 1,500 rebates for heat pump water heaters – an 180% increase in comparison to 2021.
- Expanded opportunities for lower-income customers to receive instant discounts on ENERGY STAR certified LED lighting by 34%.
- Energy savings on electricity on ENERGY STAR rated foodservice equipment increased 71% compared to 2021.

2-4

Product Efficiency Standards: Connecticut's product efficiency standards were last updated over a decade ago, and since then our state has fallen behind our regional neighbors, which have strengthened their product efficiency standards. As a result, Connecticut residents are more likely to be marketed and sold appliances and other products that require more energy and water and ultimately cost consumers more to operate than products sold in our neighboring states.

The Appliance Standards Awareness Project (ASAP) develops a model bill annually, including standards from the EPA's ENERGY STAR program and WaterSense program, which states can use as a guide to updating their appliance standards. ASAP estimates that adopting their model bill into regulation could save Connecticut a total of 77 GWh of electricity, 401 BBtu of natural gas, and 1,849 million gallons of water annually starting in 2030, resulting in annual utility bill savings of \$57 million for Connecticut households and businesses. These proposed revisions enable Connecticut residents to save money in the near term while preserving consumer choice of appliance selection, alleviate pressure on the state's energy supply, and conserve both energy and water.

Section 2 would streamline DEEP's existing authority to add new products to its energy efficiency standards and to update the standards of its existing regulated products. It also provides DEEP the authority to develop water appliance efficiency regulations in consultation with the Department of Consumer Protection. Additionally, it creates a backstop where the state may adopt existing federal efficiency standards from 2018 even if the current federal administration repeals such standards. (The Department of Energy proposed this year to revoke the existing energy and water

efficiency standards for over fifteen types of major appliances and equipment.) According to the Appliance Standards Awareness Project, revoking these standards could cost households and businesses nationally \$43 billion in net present value savings. DEEP is proposing language that safeguards consumers from excessive costs by limiting its ability to adopt or change existing standards to those standards that will have a short payback period.

Section 3 would allow DEEP to rely on third party certification of all of its regulated products, a change that would create significant efficiencies for DEEP in determining compliance with the standards.

Section 4 provides DEEP with clear authority to investigate potential violations of its product efficiency standards, including, but not limited to, a desk review of retail stores' offerings through their websites.

5 There is a widespread acknowledgement that carefully developed proactive transmission planning (e.g., transmission built to address anticipated future generation needs) is critical to ensure our grid is ready to interconnect an all of the above generation portfolio. This type of proactive planning creates cost efficiencies compared to a piecemeal approach, which efficiencies will be passed on to ratepayers through lower overall transmission costs.

There is currently debate over whether the CT Siting Council can approve an application for a transmission or substation project that is built to meet anticipated future generation needs. Certain court precedent could be read to limit the Siting Council's ability to approve such projects that don't have specific generation projects associated with them. The revisions proposed clarify that the Siting Council should take into account future reliability needs and the ability of a transmission/substation project to help address those reliability needs through a "build it and they will come" approach. The proposed language also requires that an ISO-NE or CT DEEP IRP process/study support both the need for the project and the long-term generation/reliability concern it is seeking to address

Statutory Reference:

Sec. 1: New
Sec. 2: 16a-48
Sec. 3: 16a-48
Sec. 4: 16a-48
Sec. 5: 16-50p

Background

New Proposal Resubmission

If resubmission, please provide details below. Please also note any changes made since the last submission:

Bill #(s)	Reason bill(s) did not move forward
Sec. 2-4	DEEP has submitted a proposal to update the state's product efficiency standards, which were last updated in 2007, in 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. The bill did not advance out of the Energy and Technology Committee each year, with members of the committee citing concerns about cost impact to customers. This year's proposal builds in a minimum payback requirement for customers in order for DEEP to update or implement an efficiency standard.

Have there been any changes in federal laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No Sections 1-4. No, but the current presidential administration has indicated an interest in eliminating the Energy Star Program and the federal product efficiency standards. Additionally, given that the current presidential administration has not been supportive of wind and solar projects, DEEP is interested in policy that is for other types of zero carbon energy, such as thermal energy networks and nuclear energy.

Have there been any changes in state laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Has this proposal or a similar proposal been implemented in other states?

Yes Secs. 2-4 Updated standards have been adopted by many states in recent years, including all the New England states, except for New Hampshire, as well as our neighbors in New York and New Jersey.

Have certain constituencies called for this proposal?

Yes Secs. 2-4 There has been widespread support for an update of the state's appliance efficiency standards from environmental stakeholder groups, as well as the state's electric distribution companies.

Interagency Impact

Check here if this proposal does NOT impact other agencies

Sections 2-4: The proposal to update the state's product efficiency standards impacts the Department of Consumer Protection, which currently regulates efficiency standards for water fixtures. The state's current water fixture standards have all been preempted by federal law. DEEP has discussed a path forward to updating the water fixture standards with DCP, with DCP expressing a willingness to consolidate oversight for all product efficiency standards with DEEP with a requirement for consultation with DCP in the development of new water efficiency standards. DEEP is continuing to discuss with DCP.

Section 5: Continued conversations with Office of Consumer Counsel in the summer of 2025.

Agency	Office of the Consumer Counsel (OCC)
Contact	Brooke Parker
Date Contacted	9/29/2025
Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved
Open Issues	
Agency	Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA)
Contact	Tarren O'Connor
Date Contacted	9/29/2025
Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved
Open Issues	

Agency	Department of Consumer Protection
Contact	CJ Strand
Date Contacted	10/24/2025
Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved
Open Issues	

Fiscal Impact

No Fiscal Impact

Budget Option Submitted

Include the section number(s) which have a fiscal impact and the anticipated impact:

State

No

Municipal

No

Federal

No

Other Information

If there is any additional information we should know, please detail below: N/A

Legislative Language

Insert fully drafted bill below. Please use standard legislative drafting considerations, as published by LCO [here](#).

Sec. 1. (NEW) (Effective October 1, 2026) In the event that the federal Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR program is eliminated, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Commissioner of Consumer Protection, may endorse an equivalent voluntary energy efficiency certification program established by a third-party entity. The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may coordinate with other states that endorse the same program in order to create standardized labels for consumer recognition of the program.

Secs. 2 – 4 – Sec. 2. Subdivisions (2) and (3) of subsection (d) of section 16a-48 of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2026):

(2) (A) Such efficiency standards, where in conflict with the State Building Code, shall take precedence over the standards contained in the Building Code. [Not later than July 1, 2007, and biennially thereafter, the] The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall periodically review and increase the level of such efficiency standards by adopting regulations in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 upon a determination that increased efficiency standards would serve to promote energy conservation in the state and would be cost-effective for consumers who purchase and use such new products, which standard shall be met upon a determination by a multistate appliance standards organization that the product will have a payback period of not greater than five years. [provided no] No such increased efficiency standards shall become effective within one year following the adoption of any amended regulations providing for such increased efficiency standards.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, when adopting regulations pursuant to this subdivision, the commissioner may incorporate by reference the relevant efficiency standard, including, but not limited to, definitions within said standard that differ from the definitions in this section, and any associated test standard for the relevant efficiency

standard. Such standards may include, but need not be limited to, requirements concerning the ability of a product to interface with a local electric utility's demand response program.

(3) (A) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall, in consultation with the Department of Consumer Protection, adopt and amend, from time to time, regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to designate additional products, including, but not limited to, plumbing fixtures, to be subject to the provisions of this section and to establish efficiency standards for such products (i) upon a determination that such efficiency standards: [(i) would] (I) Would serve to promote energy or water conservation in the state, [(ii)] (II) would be cost-effective for consumers who purchase and use such new products, which standard shall be met upon a determination by a multistate appliance standards organization that the product will have a payback period of not greater than five years; [,] and [(iii)] (III) would not impose an unreasonable burden on [Connecticut] businesses in the state or (ii) where product efficiency standards that were issued for or approved for publication on or before January 1, 2018, pursuant to the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, 42 USC 6201 et seq., by the United States Department of Energy were subsequently withdrawn or repealed.

(B) [The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Multi-State Appliance Standards Collaborative, shall identify additional appliance and equipment efficiency standards. The commissioner shall review all California standards and may review standards from other states in such collaborative. The commissioner shall issue notice of such review in the Connecticut Law Journal, allow for public comment and may hold a public hearing within six months of adoption of an efficiency standard by a cooperative member state regarding a product for which no equivalent Connecticut or federal standard currently exists. The commissioner shall adopt regulations in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 adopting such efficiency standard unless the commissioner makes a specific finding that such standard does not meet the criteria in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision.] When adopting regulations pursuant to this subparagraph, the commissioner may incorporate by reference the relevant efficiency standard, including, but not limited to, definitions within said standard that differ from the definitions in this section, and any associated test standard for the relevant efficiency standard. Such standards may include, but need not be limited to, requirements

concerning the ability of a product to interface with a local electric utility's demand response program.

(C) Efficiency standards established pursuant to this subparagraph, where in conflict with the State Building Code or the efficiency standards for plumbing fixtures adopted pursuant to subsection (a) of section 21a-86a, shall take precedence.

Sec. 3. Subsection (g) of section 16a-48 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2026):

(g) [Manufacturers of any new products set forth in subsection (b) of this section for which (1) no efficiency standards exist in California, and (2) the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection adopts efficiency standards, shall certify to the commissioner that such products are in compliance with the provisions of this section, except that certification is not required for single voltage external AC to DC power supplies and walk-in refrigerators and walk-in freezers. All single voltage external AC to DC power supplies shall be labeled as described in the January 2006 California Code of Regulations, Title 20, Section 1607(9). The commissioner shall promulgate regulations governing the certification of such products.] Manufacturers of products subject to regulations adopted pursuant to this section shall submit documentation, on a form prescribed by the commissioner, concerning the certification of such products by the California Energy Commission, the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Water Sense program or successor program that promotes water efficiency, the federal Energy Star program or successor program that promotes energy efficiency, or a third-party certification body designated by the commissioner, as applicable, for compliance with this section or compliance with identical standards adopted by another jurisdiction. The commissioner shall publish an annual list of [any products set forth in subsection (b) of this section on the department's Internet web site that designates which such products are certified in California and which such products not certified in California have demonstrated compliance with efficiency standards adopted by the commissioner pursuant to subparagraph (B) of subdivision (3) of subsection (d) of this section] such products.

Sec. 4. Subsection (h) of section 16a-48 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2026):

(h) The commissioner may periodically inspect or cause inspections to be made of, either in person or online, distributors and retailers of products subject to the provisions of this section. The commissioner may establish a process to anonymously report potential violations of this section through the department's Internet web site. The Attorney General may institute proceedings to enforce the provisions of this section. Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than two hundred fifty dollars. Each violation of this section shall constitute a separate offense, and each day that such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

Sec. 5 – Subdivision (3) of subsection (c) of section 16-50p of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2026):

(3) For purposes of this section, a public benefit exists when a facility is necessary for the reliability of the electric power supply of the state or for the development of a competitive market for electricity and a public need exists when a facility is necessary for the reliability of the electric power supply of the state. In making such determination for public need, the council shall consider whether a facility described in subdivision (1) or (4) of subsection (a) of section 16-50i may help meet anticipated future reliability needs by proactively creating an interconnection point for future generation or by relieving transmissions system constraints to allow for the unconstrained delivery of future generation. Any future reliability needs relied upon in this determination and potential solutions should be supported by (i) studies or findings of the regional independent system operator, as defined in section 16-1 of the general statutes, or (ii) the Integrated Resources Plan provided for in section 16a-3a of the general statutes.



Agency Legislative Proposal

2026 Session

General Information

Agency	Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection
Proposal Name	DEEP 2 – Permit Streamlining
Legislative Liaison	Megan Andrews Legislative Liaison Megan.M.Andrews@ct.gov
	Harrison Nantz Deputy Chief of Staff Harrison.Nantz@ct.gov
Division Requesting Proposal	Environmental Quality Branch, Environmental Justice Office, Natural Diversity Database team
Drafter	Brendan Schain, Sarah Huang, Gabreille Frigon, Eliza Heins, Mason Trumble, Justin Davis, Emma Cimino, Annie Decker

Overview

Brief Summary of Proposal

This proposal seeks to build on the successful efforts from DEEP and Governor Lamont to provide predictable and efficient permitting processes for permit applicants in CT.

What problem is this proposal looking to solve?

Permit applicants in CT have been seeking efficiency and predictability improvements from state regulatory agencies. DEEP has been ahead of the curve, engaging in a yearslong effort to increase its transparency, efficiency and predictability of its programs through its 20by20 and 20by26 initiatives, as well as the legislative concepts enacted in HB6848 last year, and continues to innovate in this area.

How does the proposal solve the problem?

This proposal identifies several initiatives that could continue to help streamline various DEEP permitting processes in specific ways.

Section by section summary:

Section #(s)	Section Summary
Sec. 1	The section will provide the Commissioner authority to issue a general permit for any activity for which the Commissioner has the authority to issue an individual permit. General Permits allow certain categories or classes of eligible activities to be conducted, provided they meet conditions (such as reporting, monitoring, or the use of necessary controls). While the Commissioner has authority to issue many general permits, the authorizations to do so are not uniform and some contain limitations. (See, e.g., §§ 22a-45a and 22a-411, which authorize the issuance of general inland wetlands and dam safety permits for “minor activities.”) This proposed new section would, in effect, remove those limitations imposed on general permits. General Permits can be a more efficient tool than individual permits for the regulated community seeking to authorize activities and can reduce staff time spent reviewing and issuing individual permits.
Sec. 2	This section amends CGS Sec. 22a-208a for solid waste facility permits in order to provide automatic renewals of such permits if an application to renew an existing permit has been submitted appropriately and deemed sufficient and 90 days has passed without a notice of tentative determination. CGS Sec. 4-182 provides that a timely and sufficient renewal permit application allows the permit to continue in effect until a final decision by the commissioner is made on the pending application. CGS Sec. 22a-6j also allows a permit to continue in effect until the commissioner issues a final decision on a pending sufficient but untimely permit renewal application. While such provisions allow for a permit to be continued in effect until a final decision of the commissioner has been issued, this proposal would allow for the permit to be renewed automatically in the absence of a tentative decision of the commissioner.

Statutory Reference:

Sec. 1 - New

Sec. 2 - § 22a-208a

Background

New Proposal

Resubmission

Have there been any changes in federal laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No Section 1 – No, although the proposal may help the Department use its resources more efficiently if significant proposed cuts to federal funding that supports the Department’s permitting staff are implemented.

Have there been any changes in state laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Has this proposal or a similar proposal been implemented in other states?

No

Have certain constituencies called for this proposal?

Yes The business community in CT continues to collaborate with the Department on identifying still more permitting efficiencies

Interagency Impact

Check here if this proposal does NOT impact other agencies

Agency	N/A
Contact	N/A
Date Contacted	N/A
Status	N/A
Open Issues	N/A

Fiscal Impact

- No Fiscal Impact

- Budget Option Submitted

Include the section number(s) which have a fiscal impact and the anticipated impact:

State	Section 1 – No fiscal impact this biennium. There are possible savings in the out years if general permits are issued. Section 2 – No fiscal impacts
Municipal	Section 1 – No fiscal impact this biennium. There are possible savings in the out years if general permits are issued and utilized by municipalities instead of obtaining individual permits. Section 2 – No fiscal impact.
Federal	Section 1 – None Section 2 – None

Other Information

If there is any additional information we should know, please detail below: N/A

Legislative Language

Insert fully drafted bill below. Please use standard legislative drafting considerations, as published by LCO [here](#).

Section 1. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2026)

Notwithstanding the requirements of title 22a of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner may issue a general permit for any activity that the Commissioner may authorize by issuance of an individual permit, except as prohibited in CGS Sec 22a-208a (i)(1).

Subsections (j) and (k) of Section 22a-208a of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2026)

(j) When a permittee has made a sufficient application for the renewal of an individual permit to operate a solid waste facility as required by subsection (b) of this section, the permit shall be deemed renewed if the commissioner has not signed a notice of tentative determination to approve or deny the application within ninety (90) days of determining the application is sufficient. The application to renew a solid waste facility individual permit to operate shall be made on a form prescribed by the commissioner and accompanied by the appropriate fee.

[(j)](k) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may issue an approval for a demonstration project for any activity regulated by the commissioner under this chapter provided the commissioner determines that such demonstration project (1) is necessary to research, develop or promote methods and technologies of solid waste management which are consistent with the goals of the state-wide solid waste management plan; (2) does not pose a significant risk to human health or the environment; and (3) is not inconsistent with the federal Water Pollution Control Act, the federal Rivers and Harbors Act, the federal Clean Air Act or the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. An application for such approval shall be on a form prescribed by the commissioner, be accompanied by a fee of one thousand dollars and shall provide such information as the commissioner deems necessary. Any person applying for such approval shall not commence the project prior to the commissioner's written approval. The commissioner may impose conditions upon such approval as deemed necessary to adequately protect human health and the environment or to ensure project success and such approval shall be valid for a period of not more than two

years. The commissioner may renew such approval provided the total period of approval does not exceed five years. The commissioner may order summary suspension of any such approval in accordance with subsection (c) of section 4-182. Notwithstanding the renewal process, any person may seek, or the commissioner may require, that the project obtain a general or individual permit pursuant to this chapter.



Agency Legislative Proposal

2026 Session

General Information

Agency	Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection
Proposal Name	DEEP 3 – Wildfire Safety
Legislative Liaison	Megan Andrews Legislative Liaison Megan.M.Andrews@ct.gov
	Harrison Nantz Deputy Chief of Staff Harrison.Nantz@ct.gov
Division Requesting Proposal	Forestry Division
Drafter	Christopher Martin, State Forester/Division Director

Overview

Brief Summary of Proposal

This proposal seeks to increase Connecticut's wildfire preparedness, reduce wildfire risks, protect communities, and support recovery efforts. The general statutes would be amended to improve the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's ability to address, mitigate, and respond to wildfires through resource allocation, land management practices, and intergovernmental coordination.

What problem is this proposal looking to solve?

Connecticut has experienced a significant increase in wildfire activity in recent years, including over 600 reported fires in 2024 compared to most recent five-year average of 420 which are both dangerous and costly to mitigate. These fires pose a serious public safety risk, and the Department's wildfire response is essential in keeping Connecticut residents safe.

How does the proposal solve the problem?

The Bill resolves several statutory deficiencies identified during the process of Governor Lamont declaring a civil emergency last fall 2024. Sections within this Bill modernize and correct outdated provisions that have not been reviewed in decades. As a result, Connecticut will be better prepared if another Wildfire Civil Emergency occurs.

Section by section summary:

Section #(s)	Section Summary
1	<p>Benefit to the Agency: Provides statutory consistency with 22a-174(f)(3) and 23-49a so both sections state that open burn permits by municipal officials are suspended when forest fire danger is either “high” or “extreme”. Currently 22a-174(f)(3) includes only “extreme” while 23-49a includes both “high” and “extreme”.</p> <p>Benefit to the Public: Provides clarity and consistency for greater regulatory control and compliance, reducing wildfire risk and eliminating confusion.</p>
2	<p>Benefit to the Agency: Provides DEEP Commissioner authority to ban all outdoor cooking, camping, and warming fires and all other open flames on DEEP properties during extreme forest fire risk or other exigent circumstances.</p> <p>Benefit to the Public: Provides public health and safety benefits as well as natural resource protection on DEEP properties without prohibiting public access as currently required in this section.</p> <p>Real Life Example: During October and November 2024 Connecticut experienced a statewide wildfire emergency with over 200 wildfire starts occurring within 30 days. Thankfully, most fires remained small and were controlled quickly. The number of wildfires likely would have been much larger if the DEEP commissioner hadn’t issued a burn ban on DEEP properties, followed by similar actions by 95 Connecticut municipalities. The Commissioner’s authority to place a burn ban was provided through general environmental protection statutory provisions. This proposal clarifies the Commissioner’s specific authority.</p>
3	<p>Benefit to the Agency: Provides DEEP Commissioner authority to extend one-month deadline for volunteer fire departments to submit</p>

reimbursement requests for wildfire suppression costs during extenuating circumstances.

Benefit to the Public: Allows volunteer fire departments additional time to submit wildfire suppression reimbursement requests during extenuating circumstances as determined by the DEEP Commissioner.

Real Life Example of Benefit to the Bill: During October and November 2024 Connecticut experienced a statewide wildfire emergency with over 200 wildfire starts occurring within 30 days. This number of fires within a short period of time did not provide volunteer fire departments working through their district fire wardens sufficient time to submit reimbursement requests to DEEP within the statutorily mandated one month time period. The Governor had to issue an executive order extending this deadline to three months.

4

Benefit to the Agency: Would allow a Governor declared outdoor burn ban while also keeping state, municipal, private, land trust and other woodlands open to the public. This Bill also would update the fines for violations from not less than \$5 to \$500 and from not more than \$100 to \$1000.

Benefit to the Public: Would allow outdoor recreation in woodlands to continue during outdoor burn bans as long as such activities did not include an open air fire.

Real Life Example: During October and November 2024 Connecticut experienced a statewide wildfire emergency that necessitated an outdoor burn ban. Statutory authority to implement such ban is directly tied to also prohibiting access to all woodlands except by the owner or tenant of such woodland. The benefit of this Bill would allow the Governor flexibility to institute an outdoor burn ban without also prohibiting access to all woodlands within the state.

Statutory Reference (if any): Sec. 1. 22a-174(f)(3)
Sec. 2. 23-36
Sec. 3. 23-39
Sec. 4. 23-50

Background

New Proposal

Resubmission

If resubmission, please provide details below. Please also note any changes made since the last submission:

Bill #(s)	Reason bill(s) did not move forward

Have there been any changes in federal laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Have there been any changes in state laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Has this proposal or a similar proposal been implemented in other states?

No

Have certain constituencies called for this proposal?

Yes

Sec 2. During the Fall 2024 Governor declared wildfire civil preparedness emergency the DEEP Commissioner placed an outdoor burn ban on all DEEP properties. Ninety-five municipalities followed the Commissioner's lead limiting the number of wildfires starts. During this time, no person or organization expressed opposition. The same is anticipated for this proposed statutory change.

Sec 3. Fire departments supported the 2024 Governor's executive order. No person or organization expressed opposition. The same is anticipated for this proposed statutory change

Sec 4. During October and November 2024 Connecticut statewide wildfire emergency the DEEP Commissioner declared an open flame ban on all DEEP Properties while keeping these properties open to public

access. 95 Municipalities followed suit. The burn ban while allowing continued public access was widely adhered to and publicly accepted as an appropriate measured approach to the wildfire emergency. Currently per Sec 23-50, a Governor declared burn ban must also ban public access, essentially prohibiting all outdoor recreation and likely creating considerable public opposition. Having a phased approach to public safety allows flexibility given the exact circumstances of the wildfire emergency. This proposal allows for either or both an outdoor burn and public access restriction under the most extreme circumstances.

Interagency Impact

Check here if this proposal does NOT impact other agencies

Agency	Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection
Contact	Bill Turner
Date Contacted	10/31/2025
Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved
Open Issues	Detail Open Issues

Fiscal Impact

No Fiscal Impact

Budget Option Submitted

Include the section number(s) which have a fiscal impact and the anticipated impact:

State

No

Municipal Benefit to municipalities in the assurance of reimbursement payments for wildfire suppression by offering flexibility when fire bills are due.
Yes

Federal

No

Other Information

If there is any additional information we should know, please detail below: N/A

Legislative Language

Insert fully drafted bill below. Please use standard legislative drafting considerations, as published by LCO [here](#).

Sec. 1. Subdivision (3) of subsection (f) of section 22a-174 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2026):

(f) The commissioner shall allow the open burning of brush on residential property, provided the burning is conducted by the resident of the property or the agent of the resident and a permit for such burning is obtained from the local open burning official of the municipality in which the property is located, and the open burning of brush in municipal landfills, transfer stations and municipal recycling centers, provided a permit for such burning is obtained from the fire marshal of the municipality where the facility is located, except that no open burning of brush shall occur (1) when national or state ambient air quality standards may be exceeded; (2) where a hazardous health condition might be created; (3) when the forest fire danger in the area is identified by the commissioner as **high, very high, or** extreme and where woodland or grass land is within one hundred feet of the proposed burn; (4) where there is an advisory from the commissioner of any air pollution episode; (5) where prohibited by an ordinance of the municipality; and (6) in the case of a municipal landfill, when such landfill is within an area designated as a hot spot on the open burning map prepared by the commissioner. A permit for the burning of brush at any municipal landfill, municipal transfer station or municipal recycling center shall be issued no more than six times in any calendar year. The proposed permit to burn brush at any municipal landfill, municipal transfer station or municipal recycling center shall be submitted to the commissioner by the fire marshal, with the approval of the chief elected official of the municipality in which the municipal landfill, municipal transfer station or municipal recycling center is located. The commissioner shall approve or disapprove the fire marshal's proposed permitting of burning of brush at a municipal landfill, municipal transfer station or municipal recycling center within a reasonable time of the filing of such application. The burning of leaves, demolition waste or other solid waste deposited in such landfill shall be prohibited. The burning of nonprocessed wood for campfires and bonfires is not prohibited if the burning is conducted so as not to create a nuisance and in accordance with any restrictions imposed on such burning. Nothing in this subsection or in any regulation adopted pursuant to this subsection

shall affect the power of any municipality to regulate or ban the open burning of brush within its boundaries for any purpose. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, fire breaks for the purpose of controlling forest fires and controlled fires in saltwater marshes to forestall uncontrolled fires are not prohibited. Open burning may be engaged in for any of the following purposes if the open burning official with jurisdiction over the area where the burning will occur issues an open burning permit: Fire-training exercises; eradication or control of insect infestations or disease; agricultural purposes; clearing vegetative debris following a natural disaster; and vegetative management or enhancement of wildlife habitat or ecological sustainability on municipal property or on any privately owned property permanently dedicated as open space. Open burning for such purposes on state property may be engaged in with the written approval of the commissioner. Local burning officials nominated for the purposes of this subsection shall be nominated only by the chief executive officer of the municipality in which the official will serve and shall be certified by the commissioner. The chief executive officer may revoke the nomination. The commissioner may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, governing open burning and may authorize or prohibit open burning consistent with this section. The regulations may require the payment of an application fee and inspection fee and may establish a certification procedure for local burning officials.

Sec. 2. Section 23-36 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2026):

The State Forest Fire Warden may take such action as said warden deems necessary to provide for the prevention and control of forest fires. Said warden may enter into agreements with federal agencies, with cities, boroughs and fire districts and with forest protective associations for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this section. **Said warden, if the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection deems necessary, may prohibit open flames upon any or all lands under the commissioner's control.** Said warden shall divide the state into districts for the purpose of preventing and controlling forest fires and shall appoint within these districts such district fire wardens, not exceeding

two hundred and fifty, as said warden deems necessary, who shall serve for two years or until their successors are appointed. The State Forest Fire Warden shall have supervision of district fire wardens and shall instruct them in their duties. Each district fire warden may, with the approval of the State Forest Fire Warden, appoint deputies to assist in extinguishing fires and to take charge of such extinguishing in such district fire warden's absence, provided, in cities having paid fire departments and whose boundaries are coterminous with the town boundaries, the State Forest Fire Warden may appoint a district fire warden and may assume responsibility for forest fires only upon the written request of the mayor of such city and for such portions as may be designated by such mayor. Cities without paid fire departments and portions of towns outside of city limits shall be included in forest fire districts and the State Forest Fire Warden may employ volunteer fire companies under the conditions described in this section and sections 23-37 to 23-42, inclusive. The State Forest Fire Warden shall establish rates of compensation for equipment usage, firefighting materials and supplies expended and firefighter and laborer time expended in extinguishing forest fires to be paid to such volunteer fire companies as may be employed. In establishing such rates, the State Forest Fire Warden may differentiate between various kinds of equipment and material and supplies used and the provisions of section 23-39 shall apply to the establishment of rates of compensation for firefighter and laborer time. Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes or any municipal ordinance, upon the declaration by the Governor of the existence of a state of emergency due to forest fire, the State Forest Fire Warden may assume direct authority over efforts to extinguish any forest fire and may assign such authority to any state forest fire control personnel.

Sec. 3. Section 23-39 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2026):

The compensation of district and deputy fire wardens, trained firefighters organized in accordance with rules issued by the State Forest Fire Warden and such laborers as said warden finds it necessary to employ shall be fixed by said warden on an hourly basis, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Administrative Services. Volunteer fire

companies may be compensated in accordance with section 23-36. The chief of the fire department in any town, city or borough who receives a regular salary shall be paid no additional compensation when acting as a fire warden. District fire wardens shall prepare their bills for services rendered by them and by the personnel and automobiles and other apparatus employed or used by them in extinguishing fires. The chief of any volunteer fire company may prepare bills for services rendered by said company and by the personnel and automobiles and other apparatus employed or used by them in extinguishing forest fires, if said company is allowed by town ordinance to receive payment for such bills. Such bills shall be on a form prescribed by the State Forest Fire Warden and shall be submitted to the State Forest Fire Warden within one month after the services have been rendered, and, if found correct and approved by said warden, shall be ordered paid by the State Comptroller. **The State Forest Fire Warden may extend the one-month submittal deadline by up to four months due to emergencies.** A copy of each bill so paid on account of any fire within a city, as provided in section 23-36, shall be sent by the State Forest Fire Warden to the city treasurer of the city in which the fire occurred, except bills for which a railroad company is liable under the provisions of section 23-42, and, on or before the tenth day of December in each year, such city treasurer shall draw the treasurer's order in favor of the State Treasurer for the full amount of such bills submitted during the twelve months next preceding. The State Forest Fire Warden may forgive such bills if the state would incur administrative costs in collecting the debt owed that would exceed the actual debt owed. Bills for expenses incurred or services rendered by district or deputy wardens in the performance of duties other than fire fighting shall be submitted to the State Forest Fire Warden on or before the tenth day of December and the tenth day of June in each year. Upon approval by the State Forest Fire Warden, such bills shall be ordered paid by the State Comptroller from any sums available for the expenses of the State Forest Fire Warden. All fire warden bills authorized by sections 23-37, 23-38, 23-40 to 23-42, inclusive, and this section shall show in detail the amount and character of the services performed, the exact duration thereof and all disbursements made by such wardens.

Sec. 4. Section 23-50 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2026):

Whenever it appears to the Governor that by reason of extreme drought or other hazardous conditions there is danger of forest fires, he may proclaim **(i)** that any or all sections of woodland and brush land in the state shall be closed, for such time as he may designate, to all persons except the owners or tenants of such woodlands and their agents and employees, and **in addition or in the alternative the governor may proclaim [during such period of closure]** **(ii) that** no fire shall be kindled in the open air **in any or all areas of the State**. As soon as the woodland is deemed free from the danger of fire, the Governor may revoke his proclamation. Any person who enters upon forest or brush land, except as provided herein, or who kindles or causes to be kindled a fire in the open air, during the period covered by the Governor's proclamation, shall be fined not less than five **hundred** dollars nor more than one **[hundred] thousand** dollars or imprisoned not more than six months or be both fined and imprisoned.



Agency Legislative Proposal

2026 Session

General Information

Agency	Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection
Proposal Name	DEEP 4 – Minor Revisions to DEEP Statutes
Legislative Liaison	Megan Andrews Legislative Liaison Megan.M.Andrews@ct.gov
	Harrison Nantz Deputy Chief of Staff Harrison.Nantz@ct.gov
Division Requesting Proposal	Office of Environmental Justice, Office of Land Acquisition and Management, Fisheries Division, Air Bureau
Drafter	Sarah Huang, Eliza Heins, Annie Decker, Lindsay Suhr, Justin Davis, Peter Arrestad, Emma Cimino, Paul Farrell

Overview

Brief Summary of Proposal

To make minor revisions to the general statutes relevant to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

What problem is this proposal looking to solve?

Each year, the Department finds minor statutory revisions that require updating.

How does the proposal solve the problem?

This proposal seeks to make minor and technical changes to DEEP statutes.

Section by section summary:

Section #(s)	Section Summary
1	CGS Sec. 7-131d(c) – This proposal will build off of other recent statute changes to make the UGCG grant program more equitable. This would be accomplished by allowing areas adjacent to Environmental Justice Census Block groups (areas serving those communities) to qualify for UGCG.
2	CGS Sec. 7-131g(c) This proposal will clarify a longstanding administrative issue for the OSWA program. It will allow OSWA projects that close early according to approved processes to have open space language in the deed, as long as it is subordinated to DEEP's easement.
3	Repeal CGS. Sec. 26-302 Compact for State Membership in the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission (CRASC). CRASC is defunct; Congressional authorization for the Commission expired on October 28, 2023. CRASC has been replaced by a successor organization, the Connecticut River Migratory Fish Restoration Cooperative, which was enacted via multi-state MOU in 2023.
4	CHEAPR – to amend the Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate (CHEAPR) program to correct a typo and to prioritize the issuance of increased incentives to income qualified Connecticut residents.
5	CGS Sec. 22a-201d(d) Zero-Emission School Buses This proposal would allow the use of state or other funding or financing in addition to the bond funding previously authorized under this section. The funding would be used by municipalities, school districts, and school bus operators for the purchase or lease of zero-emission school buses that are operated primarily in EJ communities.

Statutory Reference:	Sec. 1 - § 7-131d(c) Sec 2 - § 7-131g(c) Sec. 3 - § 26-302 Sec. 4 - § 22a-202(d) as amended by Public Act 24-81 Sec. 5 - § 22a-201d(d)
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Background

New Proposal Resubmission

Have there been any changes in federal laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No Section 1-5 : No impact

Have there been any changes in state laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No Section 1-5: No impact

Has this proposal or a similar proposal been implemented in other states?

Yes Justice Communities.

Section 1 – N/A

Section 2– These changes are unique to DEEP’s grant program.

Section 3 - These changes are unique to DEEP’s grant program.

Section 4- The proposal is consistent with the approach taken by other states who are refocusing their EV incentive programs on lower income residents as EV sales increase.

Section 5– These changes are unique to DEEP’s grant program and intended to leverage other available funding and align DEEP’s program with low-cost financing programs offered by the Connecticut Green Bank.

Have certain constituencies called for this proposal?

Yes Section 2 -We have heard from open space advocates, the OSWA review board, municipalities and applicants to UGCG that this is an important adjustment to make for the program.

Section 3 - We have heard from open space advocates, the OSWA review board, municipalities and applicants to OSWA that this is an important adjustment to make for the program.

Section 4: DEEP has had discussions with the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus last year, as well as equity advocates through CEEJAC, who have expressed a desire to see greater access to EV incentives for low to moderate income residents.

Section 5– We have heard from municipalities and school transportation providers that the ability to leverage multiple sources of funding, and to provide access low-cost financing through programs offered by the Connecticut Green Bank can help advance the transition to zero-emission school buses.

Interagency Impact

Check here if this proposal does NOT impact other agencies

Agency	N/A
Contact	N/A
Date Contacted	N/A
Status	N/A
Open Issues	N/A

No Fiscal Impact

Budget Option Submitted

Include the section number(s) which have a fiscal impact and the anticipated impact:

State	Section 1 – No fiscal impact
No	Section 2 – No fiscal impact
	Section 3 – No fiscal impact
	Section 4 – No fiscal impact
	Section 5 – No fiscal impact
Municipal	Section 1 – No fiscal impact
Yes	Section 2 – No fiscal impact
	Section 3 – No fiscal impact
	Section 4 – No impact to municipalities from this change other than potential indirect benefit from increased personal property / motor vehicle tax revenue from EVs that would not otherwise be purchased due to the CHEAPR Program

Federal	Section 1 – No fiscal impact
No	Section 2 – No fiscal impact
	Section 3 – No fiscal impact
	Section 4 – No fiscal impact
	Section 5 – No fiscal impact

Other Information

If there is any additional information we should know, please detail below: N/A

Legislative Language

Sec.1 – Section 7-131d(c) of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

(c) Grants may be made under the protected open space and watershed land acquisition grant program established under subsection (a) of this section for restoration or protection of natural features or habitats of, or for repurposing for urban agricultural use on, open space already owned by a (1) distressed municipality, as defined in section 32-9p, (2) targeted investment community, as defined in section 32-222, (3) municipality, provided such open space is located in an environmental justice community, as defined in section 22a-20a, or is immediately adjacent to a United States census block group in section 22a-20a(a)(1)(A), or (4) nonprofit land conservation organization, provided such open space is located in a distressed municipality, targeted investment community or environmental justice community or immediately adjacent to a United States census block group as described in section 22a-20a(a)(1)(A). Such restoration or protection may include, but need not be limited to, (A) wetland, wildlife or plant habitat restoration or restoration of other sites to a more natural condition, (B) urban agricultural use, or (C) replacement of vegetation. The total amount of grants made pursuant to this subsection shall not exceed twenty per cent of the total amount of grants made pursuant to the open space and watershed land acquisition grant program in any fiscal year.

Sec 2 –Section 7-131g(c) of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of [subdivision (3) of subsection (c) of section] 7-131d(d)(1)(C), any land that is the subject of the execution or recording of a conservation easement or restriction [that resulted from a federally funded land conservation program,

municipal conservation grant program or a private conservation grant program,] prior to the recording of a permanent conservation easement described in subsection [(e)](f) of section 7-131d, shall not be construed to constitute land that has already been committed for public use, provided:

(1) Such prior conservation easement or restriction is executed or reserved [after] not more than six months prior to the application deadline for the grant round under which the acquisition of the state's interest in such land will be funded, [execution of the grant agreement for a grant to preserve such land under the provisions of this section,] (2) at the time of the recording of the permanent conservation easement required pursuant to subsection [(e)](f) of section 7-131d, any nonfederal holder of any such prior easement subordinates such holder's interests in the land to the interests of the state in form and substance satisfactory to the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, and (3) [such other federal funds, municipal grant funds or private grant funds are used as matching funds for a grant issued under this section, and(4)]the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection determines, based on all pertinent circumstances, that the conveyance of such other conservation easement or restriction, in combination with the acquisition of the state's interest under this section, constitutes one concurrent acquisition of property or interests therein.

Sec. 3– Section 26-302 of the general statutes is repealed in its entirety.

Sec. 4 – Subsection (d) of section 22a-202 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

(d) On and after July 1, 2022, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall establish and administer a program to provide rebates or vouchers to residents, municipalities, businesses, nonprofit organizations and tribal entities located in this state when such residents, municipalities, businesses, organizations or tribal entities purchase or lease a new or used battery electric vehicle, plug-in hybrid electric vehicle or fuel cell electric vehicle. The commissioner, in consultation with the advisory board, shall establish and revise, as necessary, appropriate rebate levels, voucher amounts and maximum income eligibility for [such] prioritized rebates or vouchers. The commissioner shall prioritize the granting of rebates or vouchers to (1) residents [of environmental justice communities, residents having] with household incomes at or below three hundred per cent of the federal poverty level [and] or (2) residents who participate in state and federal assistance programs, including, but not limited to, the state-administered federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, state-administered federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, a Head Start program established pursuant to section 10-16n or assistance provided by Operation Fuel, Incorporated. Any such rebate or

voucher awarded to [a] an income qualified resident [of an environmental justice community] shall be in an amount not less than two hundred per cent [more than] of the standard rebate level or voucher amount. The commissioner, in consultation with the advisory board, may also prioritize the granting of rebates or vouchers to non-income qualified residents of environmental justice communities over other non-income qualified residents. An eligible municipality, business, nonprofit organization or tribal entity may receive not more than ten rebates or vouchers a year, within available funds, and not more than a total of twenty rebates or vouchers, except the commissioner may issue additional rebates or vouchers to an eligible business or nonprofit organization that operates a fleet of motor vehicles exclusively in an environmental justice community. On and after July 1, 2022, and until June 30, 2027, inclusive, a battery electric vehicle, plug-in hybrid electric vehicle or fuel cell electric vehicle that is eligible for a rebate or voucher under the program shall have a base manufacturer's suggested retail price of not more than fifty thousand dollars.

Section 5 – Subsection (d) of 22a-201d is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

(d) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall establish and administer a grant program for the purpose of providing a portion of the [matching] funds necessary for municipalities, school districts and school bus operators [to submit federal grant applications in order] to maximize federal or other funding or financing for the purchase or lease of zero-emission school buses and electric vehicle charging or fueling infrastructure. Applications for such grants shall be filed with the commissioner at such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes. The commissioner shall give preference to applications concerning the purchase or lease of a zero-emission school bus that will be operated primarily in an environmental justice community. The commissioner shall determine the amount a municipality, school district or school bus operator shall be required to provide to match such grant.