

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

At a Glance

KATHERINE S. DYKES, COMMISSIONER

Hank Webster, Deputy Commissioner of Energy (Public Utilities Regulatory Authority and Energy and Technology Policy)

Tracy Babbidge, Acting Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Quality (Air Management, Materials Management and Compliance Assurance, and Water Protection and Land Reuse)

Mason Trumble, Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Conservation (Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources)

Established – 2011

Statutory authority – CGS § 22a-2d

Central office – 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Number of employees – 986

Recurring operating expenses – \$255,201,813

Organizational structure –

Office of the Commissioner – Chief of Staff; Chief of Legal, Planning and Regulatory Affairs; Office of Legal Counsel; Office of Adjudications; Office of Communications, Public Affairs and Web Publications; Office of Policy and Legislative Programs; Office of Planning & Program Development; Office of Climate Planning; Land Acquisition and Management; Office of Equity and Environmental Justice; and the Bureau of Central Services.

Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Energy (Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) and Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy) – PURA: Office of Education, Outreach and Enforcement; Office of Administration and Operations; Office of Technical and Regulatory Analysis; Office of Legislative and Governmental Affairs; and Office of Federal, Regional and Wholesale Affairs. **Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy:** Office of Energy Supply and Infrastructure; Office of Building and Transportation Decarbonization; Office of Telecommunications and Broadband; Office of Affordable Housing Energy Retrofits.

Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Quality (Air, Waste and Water) – Bureau of Air Management: Divisions of Engineering; Enforcement; Planning & Standards; and Radiation. **Bureau of Materials Management and Compliance Assurance:** Divisions of Engineering & Enforcement; Emergency Response and Spill Prevention; Permitting and Enforcement; and Office of Planning. **Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse:** Divisions of Remediation; Water Planning & Management; and Land & Water Resources.

Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Conservation (Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources) – Bureau of Natural Resources: Divisions of Forestry; Fisheries; and Wildlife. **Bureau of Outdoor Recreation:** Divisions of Boating; Environmental Conservation Police; and State Parks and Public Outreach.

Mission

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is charged with conserving, improving, and protecting the natural resources and the environment of the state of Connecticut as well as making cheaper, cleaner, and more reliable energy available for the people and businesses of the state. The agency is also committed to playing a positive role in rebuilding Connecticut's economy and creating jobs – and to fostering a sustainable and prosperous economic future for the state.

Statutory Responsibility

Public Act 11-80, effective July 1, 2011, facilitated the establishment of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The majority of the Commissioner's statutory responsibilities are found in the following titles of the Connecticut General Statutes: 15, 16, 16a, 22a, 23, 25, and 26.

Public Service

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) was created by Public Act 11-80 (codified at CGS § 22a-2d). Effective July 1, 2011, DEEP brought together the former Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Public Utility Control (DPUC) – now called the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) – along with the energy policy group from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). In 2021, DEEP was given responsibility for broadband policy development and infrastructure deployment pursuant to Public Act 21-159.

During 2022-2023, DEEP continued to focus on:

- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the department
- Advancing the state's agenda to provide cleaner, cheaper, and more reliable energy and broadband to Connecticut's residents and businesses
- Effective and efficient management of the state's public utilities
- Protecting our environment and natural resources
- Providing first-class outdoor recreational opportunities to residents, businesses, and visitors
- Increasing equity, inclusion, and access in department policies, programs, planning processes, and services
- Working to increase staff diversity in all programs to reflect the state's changing demographics
- Increasing outreach and education to environmental justice and vulnerable communities
- Redesigning our webpage with input from communities and other stakeholders

- Increasing government transparency
- Continuing to collaborate with state and federally recognized tribes

Highlights and Achievements 2022-2023

ENERGY BRANCH

Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy

- **Office of Telecommunications and Broadband**
 - Completed the 2022 Connecticut Broadband Report, offering insights into efforts to bridge the digital divide through interagency cooperation for broadband expansion and digital equity enhancement in the state.
 - Submitted and obtained approval for the \$40.8 million ARPA CPF Connected Communities Grant Program, aimed at funding broadband infrastructure initiatives in areas lacking 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds, ensuring access to reliable internet at 100 Mbps/100 Mbps.
 - Submitted the five-year action plan for the \$144 million Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program to the NTIA, outlining strategic steps for progress.
 - Conducted stakeholder engagement via roundtables, regional community forums, and COG meetings to foster collaboration and gather input.
 - Continued efforts related to the Dig Once/Joint Trench docket and the One Touch Make Ready working group, streamlining infrastructure deployment processes.
- **Office of Affordable Housing Energy Retrofits**
 - Office created to implement Public Act 21-48.
 - Launched a Weatherization Barrier Remediation Program (the Residential Energy Preparation Services (REPS) Program) to make homes for people with limited income ready for energy-saving weatherization programs.
 - Continues to co-lead a working group to provide input into the development of the residential solar tariff for multi-unit affordable housing.
 - Launched a working group to identify ways to better coordinate the state’s single-family Weatherization Assistance Program with utility low-income energy efficiency programs. Ideas identified have the potential to allow both programs to better leverage state and federal funding and to more comprehensively serve low-income residents.
 - Successfully applied for increased Weatherization Assistance Program funding from the federal government, and contracting with a competitively selected service provider to launch a new multifamily Weatherization Assistance Program with the new funding.

- Awarded federal funding to design a district geothermal heating and cooling system for an affordable housing complex in Wallingford.
 - Collaborated with DEEP's Office of Building and Transportation Decarbonization to apply for early administrative funding to support application development for the federal, IRA electrification rebate funds (~\$50 M). These funds, once awarded to Connecticut by the federal Department of Energy (DOE), will lower the cost of technologies such as heat pumps and heat pump hot water heaters for Connecticut residents through income-based rebates applied at the point of sale.
 - Co-lead, in partnership with the CT Green Bank, Greenstorm discussions that include DEEP, the Energy Efficiency Board, CT Green Bank, the EDCs, and various other stakeholders.
- **Office of Building and Transportation Decarbonization**
 - Modified and approved the 2023 Conservation and Load Management (C&LM) Plan Update to align it with the Administration's equity and clean energy goals.
 - Hosted Contractor Technical Advisory Council meetings with C&LM program contractors, utility administrators, and the Energy Efficiency Board to discuss issues impacting contractors and customers.
 - Staff represent Connecticut on the ISO-NE energy efficiency forecast working group. The team member creates CT's annual projected 10-year energy efficiency budget forecast. ISO combines the projected budget with other data to forecast regional and state long-term peak and energy savings due to energy efficiency programs. [Energy-Efficiency Forecast Working Group \(iso-ne.com\)](https://www.iso-ne.com/forecasting/energy-efficiency-forecast-working-group)
 - Monitor the daily wholesale price of gasoline at the Hartford/Rocky Hill and New Haven rack terminal. Pursuant to Public Act 12-4, DEEP notifies the Attorney General if the wholesale price is equal to, or above predetermined criteria as a flag that an abnormal market condition exists.
 - In the process of finalizing High Performance Building Standards, which will update the environmental requirements associated with distribution of bond funds for state-supported projects.
 - Collaborates with state agencies, the utility companies, and CT businesses to initiate, fund, and install energy efficiency measures at state buildings. State agencies participating in [Connecticut GreenerGov](#) reduce carbon emissions, energy use, and state building operation costs. The program helps the state meet the Executive Order 21-3 mandates. Led bi-weekly, interagency GreenerGov meetings. Developed a GreenerGov work plan in partnership with staff across agencies to track progress towards goals outlined in E.O. 1 and E.O. 21-3.
 - **Office of Energy Supply and Infrastructure**
 - Released a [draft request for proposals](#) and received public comment on a solicitation for up to 3,975,000 megawatt hours per year for zero carbon renewables, including solar, onshore wind, run-of-river hydropower, energy efficiency, and storage paired with zero carbon resources. A final solicitation seeking bids is expected to be released in the fall of 2023.

- Released a [draft request for proposals](#) and received public comment on a solicitation for up to 1,196 MW of offshore wind resources. A final solicitation seeking bids is expected to be released in the fall of 2023.
- Released a [draft evaluation framework, metrics, and assumptions](#) for stakeholder review and comment in its ongoing solicitation for energy storage systems that are designed to: (1) displace fossil fuel generation, particularly in the Environmental Justice communities, while maintaining reliability; (2) interconnect new large electrical loads such as electric fleet vehicle charging facilities; and/or (3) support the integration of new intermittent renewable generation in areas of the grid that have known capacity constraints. These projects will further the State's goal of deploying 300 MW of storage by December 31, 2024, 650 MW by December 31, 2027, and 1,000 MW by December 31, 2030. A draft solicitation seeking bids is expected to be released in the fall of 2023.
- Reviewed and evaluated proposals for year 4 of Connecticut's [Shared Clean Energy Facilities](#) (SCEF) program, which aims to deploy 50 MW per year of Class I renewable energy resources such as solar and fuel cells and provide on-bill savings to participating customers, the majority of which are low to moderate income.
- Released the [Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#) showing progress through 2021 in achieving the State's economy-wide climate goals to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions 10 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, 45 percent emissions reductions below the 2001 level by 2030, and 80 percent below 2001 levels by 2050, and to have a zero carbon electric sector by 2040.
- Submitted a competitive application to DOE, along with New York, New Jersey, Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Massachusetts, for a Northeast Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub for a \$1.25 billion share of the \$8 billion in federal hydrogen hub funding available.
- Received public input on the program objectives for the State's grid resilience formula funding to reduce the likelihood and occurrence of disruptive events, particularly in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. Received federal formula funding for Years 1 and 2 of the 5-year program (\$6.5M). A draft solicitation seeking proposals for this funding is expected to be released in the fall of 2023.
- Submitted a competitive application to DOE, along with Eversource Energy, for transmission upgrades to a new offshore wind point of interconnection to ensure injection capacity of up to 2,000 MW of offshore wind and prepare the onshore grid in advance of future offshore wind development.
- Submitted a letter of intent to file an application for the EPA's Solar for All competitive funding opportunity, which is a \$7B program to deploy solar in low income and disadvantaged communities. In the process of receiving [public comment](#) on proposed uses of funding for the State's application. Applications are due to the EPA no later than September 26.

Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA)

- **Rate Cases**

- Conducted two prudency reviews for rate increase applications affecting over 540,000 Connecticut ratepayers.
- Issued two decisions that both protected ratepayers from paying for imprudent utility expenses, while ensuring that the two utilities' financial conditions are sufficiently maintained.
- [Aquarion Decision Summary](#)
- [UI Decision Summary](#)
- **Grid Modernization**
 - Issued final decisions in several regulatory proceedings to advance the Authority's Equitable Modern Grid Initiative
 - August 31, 2022: 17-12-03RE08 established an innovative framework by which the utilities must plan and implement their reliability and resilience-based capital programs. These plans must be submitted to PURA for its review and approval in future general rate cases.
 - September 14, 2022: 22-06-05 established requirements for the utilities' proposed storage projects pursuant to Public Act 22-55.
 - November 9, 2022: 17-12-03RE07 established a transparent process for the utilities to capture the competitive benefits of non-wires solutions (i.e., innovative or non-traditional) to meeting the needs of the electric distribution system to save ratepayers money and provide better societal outcomes.
 - Issued final decisions establishing program design improvements, and goal refinement in six annual reviews of the clean energy programs established by PURA's Equitable Modern Grid Framework including:
 - Docket No. 22-08-01: 2022 Clean and Renewable Energy Program Data and Report
 - Docket No. 22-08-02: Residential Renewable Energy Solutions Program Review – Year 2
 - Docket No. 22-08-03: Non-Residential Renewable Energy Solutions Program Review – Year 2
 - Docket No. 22-08-04: Shared Clean Energy Facility Program Review – Year 4
 - Docket No. 22-08-05: Energy Storage Solutions Program Review – Year 2
 - Docket No. 22-08-06: Electric Vehicle Charging Program Review – Year 2
 - January 31, 2023: Issued the first solicitation through the Innovative Energy Solutions Program with the goal of identifying, piloting, and scaling innovative technology offerings or programs to help realize an equitable modern electric grid in Connecticut. This solicitation attracted over 50 applications spanning multiple technologies. These proposals are still under review with PURA.
- **Performance-Based Regulation**
 - April 26, 2023: Completed Phase I of PURA's investigation into a Performance-Based Regulation (PBR) Framework for the utilities through a final decision in Dkt. No. 21-05-15. This Decision adopted regulatory goals and priority outcomes

established through a robust stakeholder process pursuant to Section 1 of Public Act 20-5, also known as the “Take Back Our Grid” Act.

- **Energy Affordability**
 - Issued a decision in Docket No. 22-05-01, Energy Affordability Annual Review, implementing more flexible eligibility criteria for the utilities’ arrearage forgiveness programs, and directed the utilities to implement an auto-enrolling process to designate customers as “Hardship”.
 - Issued a decision in Dkt. No. 17-12-03RE11 on October 19, 2022, directing the utilities to implement a two-tiered low-income discount rate for customers at or below 60% SMI by January 1, 2024.
 - Issued a decision in Dkt. No. 14-07-19RE06 on July 27, 2022, directing the utilities to redesign their residential customer bills and websites to better facilitate customers’ understanding of bill components, reasons for cost changes, and awareness of CT’s energy goals.
- **Water Infrastructure**
 - Adjudicated and approved three applications for Water Infrastructure and Conservation Adjustments for the purpose of accelerating the replacement or rehabilitation of aging water systems as well as to encourage conservation and secure system resilience.
- **Electric Infrastructure Safety**
 - Issued decisions in Dkt. Nos. 21-07-29 and 21-11-05 implementing procedures that expedite the removal of double poles, and the identification and resolution of structurally compromised or unsafe poles.
- **Gas Pipeline Safety / Call Before You Dig**
 - Continued to better ensure public safety and deter safety violations and violators by conducting over 500 gas pipeline safety inspections, investigating over 900 reports of Call Before You Dig damages and violations, and taking over 375 enforcement actions, including collecting approximately \$5,600,000 in civil penalties.
- **Office of Education, Outreach and Enforcement**
 - Monitored the activities of electric suppliers in Connecticut and initiated investigations regarding certain practices of several of those electric suppliers to determine whether they are in compliance with state statutes, regulations, and PURA’s orders.
 - From July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, the Authority either settled or fully litigated 7 matters with suppliers, resulting in more than \$10 million in fines and more than \$2 million in restitution to customers.
 - Additionally, during the same time period, EOE processed 246 Class I, II, or III application dockets, 18 electric submetering applications, 16 water submetering applications, 72 small cell wireless applications, 24, wireline facility applications, 1 electric supplier application, 30 electric aggregator applications, 4 electric supplier periodic reviews, and 7 certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) dockets.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BRANCH (Air, Waste, and Water)

Bureau of Air Management

- **Advocated for strong federal clean air rules, standards, and policies to advance Connecticut's goals and objectives, including:**
 - EPA's proposed New Source Performance Standards for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Electric Generating Units.
 - Responding to EPA's Request for Information on Large Municipal Waste Combustors.
 - EPA's proposed Multi-pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles.
 - Responding to EPA's State Implementation Plan Call for Start-up, Shut-down and Malfunctions (SSM).

- **Advanced clean transportation/mobile source regulatory strategies**
 - Advanced the adoption of Connecticut's Clean Air Act Public Act 22-25 and oversaw implementation of clean air related provisions.
 - Engaged with California as part of its regulatory process for advancing a clean vehicles proposal.
 - Managed the Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate (CHEAPR) vehicle incentive program and provided administrative support for the CHEAPR Board by deploying over \$18 million to support the purchase of over 10,000 clean vehicles in Connecticut.
 - Administered several funding sources, including Volkswagen, the Diesel Emissions Reductions Act, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean School Bus Program, to support the transformation of the transportation sector to meet the State's air quality and climate goals.
 - Launched an e-Bike incentive program committing \$750,000 for 500 vouchers to residents of environmental justice communities.

- **Continued to address ozone nonattainment, air pollution transport, and advance regional collaboration**
 - Continued to manage the ozone reclassification process and the development of an implementation plan and initiated formal regulatory changes to reflect the reclassification to "severe" non-attainment with respect to the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ozone (smog).
 - Continued to work collaboratively with the Office of the Attorney General and participate in regional and national dialogues to ensure compliance with "Good Neighbor" requirements and other policy and legal mechanisms to address air pollution transport.

- **Monitored air quality statewide and issued daily air quality forecasts**

- Maintained and operated an existing network of 14 air quality monitoring sites statewide.
 - Issued a daily forecast to inform the public of air quality levels measured daily and issued corresponding public health notifications.
 - Advanced efforts in community-based monitoring to further expand statewide monitoring efforts and increase data and transparency on localized air quality conditions.
- **Air Quality Permitting**
 - Implemented the Title V and NSR permitting programs.
 - Received 134 permit applications and completed processing 103 permit applications.
 - Continue to prioritize permit timeliness and meeting 20by20 timeframes, an initiative to increase the predictability, efficiency, and transparency of DEEP's regulatory processes.
 - Continued to advance a regulatory agenda in response to EPA rulemakings.
- **Air Enforcement**
 - Administered a field inspection program of major and minor sources of air pollution to meet EPA requirements and commitments including all phases of compliance reviews.
 - Conducted compliance evaluations of hundreds of major and minor sources of air pollution; many such compliance evaluations entailed field inspections
 - Responded to nearly 100 public complaints regarding air quality
 - Launched the Department's Geospatial Measurement of Air Pollution ("GMAP") program, a community-based air quality monitoring program that will emphasize pollution surveillance in environmental justice communities
 - Issued violation notices to document noncompliance with state and federal air quality statutes/regulations; developed and executed administrative consent orders entailing injunctive relief and the payment of civil penalties
 - Developed and executed stipulated orders to curb emissions of ozone precursor pollutants (nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds) from high-emitting sources
 - Administered the Department's emission trading programs, including the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative ("RGGI") carbon dioxide trading program
- **Ensured the safe, secure, and environmentally responsible use of ionizing radiation**
 - Modernized program for regulation of radioactive materials by updating regulations and procedures to be compatible with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in preparation for becoming NRC Agreement State to assume regulatory authority for radioactive materials.

- In cooperation with federal partners, continued to provide ongoing support and oversight, and to ensure safety and regulatory compliance for operations at the Millstone Nuclear Power facility.
 - Ensured safe and secure shipment of radioactive and spent nuclear fuel in state.
 - In cooperation with federal partners, ensured continued safe storage of spent nuclear fuel.
 - Conducted environmental monitoring confirming no buildup of radiation in environment surrounding nuclear facilities in state.
 - Implemented state oversight and safety requirements to ensure safe and effective mammography equipment.
 - Coordinated emergency planning, preparedness, and response efforts to ensure effective management of potential consequences associated with the radiation releases.
 - Coordinated with federal partners to monitor for any adverse effects from hostilities in Ukraine related to potential radiological releases.
 - Coordinated study and evaluation of the role of advanced nuclear in decarbonizing the electrical grid.
- **Compliance Assistance/Education and Outreach/Electronic Tools/Environmental Justice**
 - Supported and completed the E-filing of annual emission statements.
 - Held bi-monthly meetings of the Air Advisory Committee (SIPRAC) to promote effective communications and enhanced transparency with stakeholders.
 - Focused compliance assistance efforts in the Air Bureau's permitting and enforcement programs on building stronger links with environmental justice stakeholders.
 - Met quarterly with the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Committee Subcommittee on Air and Transportation to discuss priority actions for 2023.
- **Continued engagement in statewide, regional, and national issues associated with air quality and radiation safety by representing Connecticut's interests with the following organizations**
 - National Association of Clean Air Agencies
 - Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management
 - Ozone Transport Commission
 - Northeast High-Level Radioactive Waste Transportation Task Force
 - Nuclear Energy Advisory Council

Bureau of Materials Management and Compliance Assurance

Waste Engineering and Enforcement Division

- With the closure of the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) Resource Recovery Facility in Hartford, Connecticut is now shipping approximately 860,000 tons per year of solid waste out of state. The single largest component of solid waste that is sent to incinerators and landfills is organic waste, including food scraps.
 - With an additional \$5 million in funding from the Legislature, DEEP continued to provide grants and technical assistance to businesses and municipalities through the Sustainable Materials Management Grant Program focused on organics collection programs.
 - DEEP released a Request for Applications for municipalities and regional waste authorities to form new or expand existing regional waste authorities and engage in planning activities for diversion programs and infrastructure development.
- DEEP and more than 100 municipalities from across the state have now joined the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM) formed in 2020 to explore and develop options for actions that Connecticut municipalities and DEEP can implement in order to counter the growing solid waste management concerns faced by the state. As part of the initiative, four working groups were established to focus on specific areas of interest, including: Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR); Increase Reuse and Recycling; Food Scraps/ Organics Collection and Diversion; and Unit Based Pricing (UBP). Meetings of the coalition and individual working groups are ongoing.
- Connecticut currently has four successful EPR programs for the collection and recycling of used or unwanted electronics, thermostats, paint and mattresses. In 2022, Connecticut passed Public Act 22-27, requiring the establishment of a statewide stewardship program for certain gas cylinders. That program will be fully operational in 2025. In 2023, Connecticut passed Public Act 23-62, requiring extended producer responsibility for tires.
- In 2021, the Legislature passed significant changes to modernize the state’s bottle bill. DEEP has been preparing for the changes in a variety of ways, including initiating a “Bottle Bill Stakeholder Process” in July 2021 to generate feedback from impacted and interested stakeholders about the proposed changes and their implementation. DEEP has also created a Beverage Container Recycling Grant Program, at the direction of the Legislature, to provide grants to establish new redemption centers, particularly geared to new, locally- and minority-owned businesses in environmental justice communities and urban centers.
- DEEP continues to develop opportunities to streamline permitting for food waste collection and processing facilities to increase its diversion. On January 13, 2022, DEEP issued a modification to the existing general permit for commercial solid waste management facilities as Appendix H. The new appendix authorizes the receipt, storage, transfer, and de-packaging of food waste at registered aggregation locations throughout the state. Five facilities currently hold individual solid waste facility permits for the management of food waste through anaerobic digestion and food waste composting. Nine additional municipal and private facilities are currently registered for food waste collection and diversion activities under Connecticut Solid Waste Demonstration Project authorizations, temporary authorizations, Beneficial Use Determinations, or other streamlined permitting options. Several other municipalities also collect food scraps at municipal transfer stations or satellite drop off locations authorized under their Municipal Transfer Station General Permit registrations.

Water Permitting and Enforcement Division

- Stormwater staff are actively participating in the process to update the CT Stormwater Quality Manual and CT Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control and in a multi-agency workgroup collaborating to mitigate the impacts of winter salt usage on the environment and drinking water supplies.
- DEEP continues to work to identify permit streamlining opportunities.

Emergency Response and Spill Management Division

- Responded to reports of 1,609 releases of petroleum or hazardous material to ensure steps were taken to protect public health and the environment and that a proper cleanup was conducted.

Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse

Long Island Sound

- Through a strong public-private partnership between the National Audubon Society, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the project team restored and improved the resilience of 34 acres of the Great Meadows Marsh that was degraded by historic filling, non-native invasive plants that outcompete native species, failing infrastructure that caused inundation and marsh degradation, and climate-induced sea level rise.
- \$1.3 million in EPA funds was awarded to NGO partners for planning and design of marsh restoration projects at Hammonasset Beach State Park and Ash Creek estuary in Bridgeport and Fairfield.
- Developed a four-year budget implementation plan for \$26 million of EPA BIL funds.

Water Planning

- Participated with the Water Planning Council to update the State Drought Plan, submit a Report on Water Planning Council Activities and Work Plan for 2023, and initiated a workgroup to evaluate the USGS stream gage and monitoring networks.

Clean Water (Wastewater)

- Nearing completion of work with communities across the state to upgrade wastewater treatment plants to address phosphorus pollution. By April 1, 2022, substantial completion of phosphorus upgrades was achieved statewide, which will improve water quality by reducing nutrient loads in our rivers, streams, and the Long Island Sound.
- In July 2022, finalized the FY22-23 Priority List for implementation of the next phase of wastewater infrastructure projects using the Clean Water Fund, as supplemented by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds. Clean Water Fund priorities include providing financial assistance (including subsidies) to support shovel-ready water quality projects to upgrade wastewater treatment facilities and collection system infrastructure, address

combined sewer overflows in four communities (Hartford, Norwich, Bridgeport, New Haven), support green projects to address climate change, and implement federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds for clean water projects with a focus on shovel-ready projects in distressed areas to mitigate sanitary sewer overflows.

- In June 2023, committed state Clean Water Fund and Clean Water Fund-related funding to implement a pilot program that will address sewage overflows in streets and basements in North Hartford, where residents have been chronically impacted by the long-term recurrence of sewer overflows. The funds will be applied to 12 projects (estimated to cost \$170 million) proposed by the Metropolitan District (MDC) to increase protections from sewer and stormwater-related flooding and backups in North Hartford. Five projects are slated to begin in 2023, six projects will begin in 2024, and one project will begin in 2025.
- Continue to implement Sewage Right to Know requirements using DEEP’s cloud-based system (QAlert) and associated CT DEEP Performance Dashboard to the expanded reporting requirements of Public Act 21-42. The system allows reporters to report sewage spills, make corrections, and provide data updates, thus allowing for more accurate data. The Dashboard also allows for analytics and widgets to improve public transparency and self-service. To meet the real-time notification requirement of Public Act 12-42, DEEP is using an X (formerly known as Twitter) account called “CTSewerOverflows” (@CTSewageSpills) through which DEEP disseminates reports of sewage spills in the state.

Dam Safety

- Initiated or completed repair of Pachaug Pond dam, Upper Bolton Lake Dam, and Pine Acres Dam, and removed one state-owned dam.
- More than 50 state-owned dams were inspected, and the process begun to repair or remove six of these dams.
- DEEP coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and municipalities to apply for funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Release Cleanup

- Development of Release-Based Cleanup regulations is on-going pursuant to P.A. 20-9, in which DEEP and DECD are co-chairs of a working group to receive stakeholder feedback and advice on a new program. The new program will align Connecticut’s cleanup program with 48 other states.
- Substantial cleanup on-going at the Raymark Industries Federal Superfund Project in Stratford to remove Raymark waste from multiple locations in town for consolidation. Project is advancing with substantial BIL funding (\$70M so far)
- Brownfield cleanup advancing in environmental justice communities with assistance from a \$485,000 BIL award from EPA.
- Implementation of critical recommendations of the PFAS Action Plan have been underway: Testing of private drinking water wells for PFAS contamination in vulnerable communities across the state; Take-back of aqueous film forming foam from state and municipal fire departments, and procurement of new regional foam trailers for major incident response using new “green” foam concentrate.

Water Diversions

- Reissued four legacy diversion permits on the Quinnipiac River. The Quinnipiac River Basin is in a heavily populated area of the state and the river provides waste assimilation as well as diversion from groundwater, which makes the basin complicated for permitting. Reissuing these four permits was possible, in part due to monitoring performed by the permittees and instream monitoring by DEEP over many years.
- Initiated a process to better account for water use by working with the regulated community to identify unused registrations.

Coastal Permitting

- Created outreach material to assist coastal property owners and beach associations with understanding of what coastal resources can be found along Connecticut's coastline and state environmental laws which highlight what activities can be conducted as of right and which require authorization from DEEP prior to undertaking.
- The Land and Water Resources Division launched a new enforcement page that includes a way for citizens to report wetland or watercourse violations, an explanation of what to expect from a DEEP inspection on a complaint, and highlights coastal permitting requirements.

Infrastructure Permitting

- Created a new Infrastructure section dedicated to handling infrastructure projects within the Land & Water Resources Division. The section is focused on processing permit applications related to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which includes unprecedented increases in infrastructure investment in an efficient manner.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BRANCH (Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources)

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation

State Parks and Public Outreach Division

- Attendance at State Parks and Forest Recreation Areas grew considerably during the pandemic, and annual visitation is now estimated at more than 17 million visitors. Our diverse visitors come from every community in the state, and we have removed financial barriers to entry by allowing free parking access to everyone with a CT registered vehicle through our Passport to the Parks program.
- In collaboration with DOT, established The Park ConneCT program, creating free bus and shuttle service to seven Connecticut State Parks, including Hammonasset Beach State Park, during 2021. The program was expanded in 2022 and 2023 to now include three additional locations: Sherwood Island State Park, Osbornedale State Park, and Indian Well State Park.
- Continued developing projects involving more than \$50 million of infrastructure improvements across our system of state parks and forests. These improvements include

repair and refurbishment of historic structures, utility upgrades, and the expansion of recreational facilities at our facilities. The adopted state budget includes unprecedented support of now well over \$100 million to advance these important projects.

- With a consultant and professional trail designer, began designing approximately 30 miles of mountain bike trails in the Pachaug State Forest. The trail will be designed using public input and in a sustainable manner.
- The State's Recreation Trails Grant Program has dramatically accelerated both the number of projects funded across the state, as well as the total dollars dedicated to this year's grant round (\$9 million). In addition, the adopted state budget provides an additional \$20 million over the biennium for this municipal/NGO grant program which provides resources for planning, design and construction of important and popular recreation trails projects.

Boating Division

- The Boating Division continued to advance Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) education through seasonal Boating Education Assistants, providing municipal boat launch monitor training and issuance of Special Use Licenses. AIS Stamp funds were utilized to provide training to AIS stewards, and a digital media campaign for AIS Stamp awareness. DEEP partnered with the Candlewood Lake Authority to provide public awareness and recommendations for discouraging the growth of these harmful plants and animals.
- A total of 9,169 students took Boating Division-approved boating safety courses including 1,938 students in 87 free safe boating courses led by DEEP staff and volunteer instructors.
- The Boating Division continued to work on plans to renovate boat launches at Squantz Pond State Park and Niantic River State Boat Launch.
- The Boating Division oversaw the removal of 1.28 million gallons of recreational vessel boat sewage by managing pump out grants for stationary units and vessels in Candlewood Lake and Long Island Sound in 2022. Grant money totaling more than \$1.03 million was also awarded for boat sewage disposal facilities, or pump out stations, for 35 marine facilities during the 2023 boating season. The program is administered by DEEP with a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Clean Vessel Act program and provides free pump out service to boaters in Connecticut.

Environmental Conservation Police Division

- The Environmental Conservation Police Division (EnCon) has been actively recruiting this past year to hire additional officers to increase staffing levels from historic low levels. EnCon has hired 15 new officers in the past year. Training for the new officers is ongoing and we are just now seeing some of these new hires complete their initial training and making a positive impact with their service.
- The EnCon Division remained busy for this fiscal period, logging 19,961 calls for service, which included 243 public outreach events, 121 arrests, 1240 infractions, 571 written warnings, and 974 verbal warnings. Officers logged contacts with approximately 1,225 hunters, 6,250 anglers and 2800 boaters.

- EnCon has completed the transition to E-citations, which is beneficial in the time savings and administrative burden of using and tracking paper copies of infractions.
- EnCon has recently purchased two (2) new vessels for patrolling the State's inland water bodies. These new vessels are replacing older vessels that were past their useful life and had to be taken out of service. The Division has also completed updates to the division mobile command center trailer. These needed updates will enable the deployment of the command trailer to support officers and staff during long duration incidents such as search and rescue events.
- EnCon division is continuing to improve its processes and is excited to announce that we have met Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POSTC) Tier 1 accreditation standards on time and are on track to meet Tier 2 and Tier 3 accreditation. This accreditation process requires each law enforcement agency to evaluate policy and procedures and ensure we are staying current with the needs of the public and agency to provide professional law enforcement services that focus on our mission to provide natural resource protection and public safety through education, outreach and enforcement in the areas of fish and game, boating, commercial fishing, wildlife management, parks and forests.

Bureau of Natural Resources

Forestry Division

DEEP maintains a roster of agency staff members and personnel who have been certified to fight forest or wildfires. Crew members must complete a rigorous training program and participate in an annual physical work capacity test and a refresher training course. Connecticut maintains this firefighting capability to participate in a reciprocal aid program operated by the U.S. Forest Service. Under this program, trained personnel from other parts of the nation are available to assist Connecticut in the event of a fire emergency or other natural disaster. All state agency expenses directly associated with these deployments are 100% reimbursed to the State by the U.S. Forest Service.

- Forestry has applied for and received \$829,000 in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to support priority items identified in Connecticut [2020 Connecticut Forest Action Plan](#).
- Forestry has applied for and received \$2,625,000 Inflation Reduction Act funding and is awaiting the outcome of a \$20,000,000 Urban Forestry NOFO competitive application to implement Governor Lamont's goal of increasing urban tree canopy cover within environmental justice communities.
- Forestry staff facilitated the development of more than 9,230 acres of new or revised forest stewardship plans on private forest land and provided education and technical assistance to more than 1,100 landowners.
- The Forestry Division enabled private Connecticut forest landowners to access over \$1 million in federal funding from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program for implementing sound forest management practices.
- State Lands Forest Management (SLM) staff initiated eleven timber sale agreements improving forest health and wildlife habitats on approximately 594 acres of Agency-

managed State Forests. eDEEP staff from SLM, Land Acquisition and Management, and Legal addressing a substantial backlog of encroachments on DEEP managed properties. Currently, the team is actively working to resolve 59 encroachments ranging from illegally store equipment to permanent structures on DEEP properties. Ten have been resolved, two have been referred to the Attorney General's office, and the remaining are in process towards resolution. It is essential that DEEP maintain vigilance to discourage these blatant trespass issues on public trust properties, which are being addressed after several years of neglect, thanks to recent staffing replenishment. .

- SLM Staff initiated control of invasive plant species threatening forest health and inhibiting natural regeneration on 132 acres.
- Connecticut's Interstate Fire Crew members (CIFC) deployed to Arizona, New Mexico, Ohio, and Texas, during calendar year 2022. So far in 2023, assistance requests have been received and CIFC has responded to Rhode Island, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Montana, and Oregon. The Nova Scotia and Quebec forest fires had significant air quality impacts for many parts of the US, including Connecticut. DEEP maintains a roster of agency staff members and personnel who have been certified to fight forest or wildfires. Crew members must complete a rigorous training program and participate in an annual physical work capacity test and refresher training course. Connecticut maintains this firefighting capability to participate in a reciprocal aid program operated by the U.S. Forest Service and the Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact. Under this program, trained personnel from other parts of the nation are available to assist Connecticut in the event of a fire emergency or other natural disaster. All state agency expenses directly associated with these deployments are 100% reimbursed to the state of Connecticut by the requesting Agency.

Fisheries Division

- The dedicated staff of the Fisheries Division focus on advancing the conservation, enhancement, restoration, use, and appreciation of Connecticut's fish, fisheries, and fish habitats. Work occurs across several broad programs, including Fish Culture (Hatcheries), Inland Fisheries Management, Habitat Conservation and Enhancement, Diadromous Fisheries Restoration, Constituent Services, and the CT Aquatic Resources Education program.
- **The Fish Culture** program operates three fish hatcheries.
 - The Quinebaug Valley Trout Hatchery (est. 1973) is the largest and raises most of the trout stocked in support of recreational fishing.
 - The Kensington State Fish Hatchery (est. 1932) focuses on rearing Atlantic salmon to support popular fisheries in the Naugatuck and Shetucket rivers.
 - The Burlington State Fish Hatchery (est. 1923) rears "Survivor Strain Brown Trout" to support the world-renowned blue-ribbon trout fishery in the West Branch Farmington River and Kokanee Salmon to support unique fisheries in select northwestern lakes.
 - In total, staff enhanced fishing opportunities for Connecticut residents by producing 550,000 catchable-size trout, 1,600 large broodstock Atlantic Salmon,

and 280,000 Kokanee Salmon fingerlings. Over 2,000 locations were stocked across nearly 100 lakes and ponds and more than 125 rivers and streams.

- **Inland Fisheries Management** programs focus on the monitoring, assessment, and maintenance of coldwater (e.g., trout and salmon) and warmwater (e.g., bass and catfish) fisheries.
 - Conducted in-person angler surveys to determine angler catch and opinion data from three lakes/ponds and four rivers/streams.
 - Conducted 394 fish community samples using a variety of sampling gears including backpack electrofishers, boat electrofishers, trap nets, and hoop nets.
 - Stocked over 22,000 Northern Pike into four Pike Management Lakes.
 - Stocked 35,931 walleye fingerlings to support future angling effort.
 - Recommended modifications to the sportfishing regulations to clarify language and enhance fisheries.

- **The Connecticut Aquatic Resources Education (CARE)** program has been teaching beginners (both rural and urban communities) about the wonders of fish and fishing since 1986. The CARE program offers a variety of “Fish with CARE” classes and events showcasing urban and suburban fishing opportunities. These events are designed to increase fishing participation by showing participants how fun and easy fishing can be while also fostering an appreciation for the environment and our state’s natural resources.
 - Developed over 10 fishing instruction videos.
 - Implemented a self-paced “Learn to Fish” web-based course in both English and Spanish.
 - Conducted 156 fishing classes or events.
 - Introduced 5,725 participants to the many benefits of fishing in a meaningful and positive way.
 - Implemented an online “angler recognition” portal to acknowledge catches of trophy fish, state record fish, first catches, and lifetime personal best catches.
 - Facilitated the Youth Fishing Passport and the accompanying year-long fishing challenge contest to engage youth and their caregivers to spend quality time together outdoors.
 - The work of the CARE program is only possible thanks to a team of trained volunteers who donated 3,164 hours of their time during the fiscal year.

- **The Constituent Services Program** provides support on all things fish or fishing, including the following:
 - Maintain the Division’s webpages.
 - Disseminate information and address concerns or answer questions via social media platforms.
 - Process permits related to Scientific Collecting, Fishing Derby/Tournaments, Liberation, Importation, and issuance of Special Fishing Regulations.
 - Publish the “Fishing Guide”, which contains rules and regulations related to fishing.

- Established a collaborative relationship with FishBrain to have fishing regulations published in the world's most popular fishing app at no cost to the state.
- Respond to phone calls and emails from the public seeking information and advice related to fish and fishing.
- **The Habitat Conservation and Enhancement (HCE)** program serves as a vital liaison for the Fisheries Division with other DEEP Program personnel who take primary responsibility in issuing permits for regulated activities that potentially impact fish populations and their habitats. HCE staff interact directly with federal, state, and local regulatory and planning agencies, as well as private conservation organizations and individuals to provide timely information to conserve, restore, and enhance the state's aquatic environments.
 - Provided technical review and comments on over 250 regulated activities
 - Reviewed approximately 100 triploid Grass Carp Permit applications
 - The Grants for the Control of Aquatic Invasive Species Program awarded 10 grants totaling approximately \$223,000 to organizations conducting control, research, and educational projects related to aquatic invasive species.
- **The Diadromous Fish Restoration Program** serves to monitor and enhance those species of fish which migrate between freshwater and saltwater for some part of their life. These species are often important both economically and ecologically. Construction of dams during the early 1800s has often reduced the ability for these fish to reach optimal freshwater habitat needed to support their population.
 - Staff monitored, operated, or provided technical assistance related to the operation and maintenance of 65 fishways across the state.
 - A total of 1,500 adult Alewife, 669 adult American Shad, 217 adult Sea Lamprey were transplanted to waters that historically supported runs in order to re-establish viable populations.

Wildlife Division

- The Wildlife Division continued to provide technical assistance to municipalities and individual residents to address the challenges of a growing and geographically expanding black bear population. Both the numbers of home entries and the complaints about bear damage to property and livestock continued to increase. In 2022, bears were reported from 158 of our 169 towns and cities with observations of sows with cubs, an indication of a breeding population, occurring in over 90 towns. In 2022, conflicts with trashcans and bird feeders accounted for most of the reported complaints. Backyard chickens represented 85 livestock complaints. Unfortunately, 2022 also included a human attack on a 10-year-old.
- The Outreach Program within the Wildlife Division continued to engage the public across a variety of platforms. Our social media engagement with residents remains strong:
 - Facebook: 52,484 followers
 - Instagram: 5,375 followers
 - X (formerly Twitter): 1,776 followers
 - Wildlife Highlights eNewsletter: 7,010 subscribers

- Hunter Highlights eNewsletter: 1,703 subscribers
- *Connecticut Wildlife* magazine, the DEEP website, and a variety of printed and digital materials provided additional outreach opportunities. Staff conducted a wide variety of public programs, most commonly on bears, bobcats, and coyotes, but also including native pollinators and illegal trade in turtles, reaching over 7000 people. Master Wildlife Conservationist volunteers provided many additional public programs and participated in numerous outreach events.
- The Conservation Education Firearms Safety Program (CEFS) conducted training classes for firearms, bow, and trapping activities. A total of 2,059 students graduated from these programs. Seven mentored Junior Pheasant Hunts, advanced hunter education seminars (venison processing; turkey hunting), and special outreach events were conducted to promote and address the goals of Connecticut’s Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) plan.
- In fall of 2022, The Natural Diversity Data Base program launched a new online review tool to streamline the environmental review process relative to state-listed species. People are now able to request a review through the ezFile portal and can obtain both a simple site assessment or complete a review request filing electronically.
- Connecticut’s 112 Wildlife Management Areas and 96 wildlife impoundments were the focus habitat management projects ranging from invasive species control to prescribed burns. A prescribed burn was conducted at Suffield Wildlife Management Area to help restore native warm-season grasses—critical habitat for the state endangered upland sandpiper and grasshopper sparrow. Another at Matianuck Natural Area Preserve helped restore dunes that are part of the last remaining sand plain habitat in Connecticut and home to a variety of state listed species.

COMMISSIONER’S OFFICE

Climate Planning Office

- The Climate Planning Office continues to support cross-agency functions for the three branches of DEEP through integrating planning for the impacts of climate change and reducing carbon emissions in line with the state’s statutory goals of a 45% economy-wide GHG emissions reduction by 2030 and 80% by 2050, as well as a zero-carbon energy supply by 2040, using an equity lens and informed by the best available climate science.
- The Office leads and/or coordinates policy and program development to achieve the above goals, including the implementation of Executive Order 21-3. The Climate Office launched the DEEP Climate Resilience Fund with a call for proposals in September 2022. 21 grants totaling \$8.8 million for climate resilience planning and project development were announced in June 2022. The office assisted with the first meetings of the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC), which includes multiple members of the GC3 Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group.
- The Office facilitated the Governor’s Council on Climate Change (GC3) on behalf of the Commissioner. The working groups met in summer and fall 2022 to review implementation actions of the Council’s recommendations. Each working group

participated in a training on equity and environmental justice. The GC3 convened on December 6, 2022 to present the findings of the working groups.

- The Office coordinated the state's membership in national (U.S. Climate Alliance) and international (Under2 Coalition) coalitions to reduce carbon emissions.
- The Climate Planning Office supported the passage of legislation informed by recommendations from the GC3, including the adoption of a 5% urban tree canopy cover statewide.
- The Office supported the procurement of federal grants to support climate action under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, including winning the state's first grant from the NFWF National Coastal Resilience Fund and leading the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Phase 1 climate planning effort.

Office of Planning and Program Development (OPPD)

- OPPD continued to support cross-agency functions for the three DEEP branches in the areas of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, Environmental Review, and Permit Assistance, while fulfilling its own programmatic responsibilities.
- For Enforcement, OPPD coordinated training for agency staff on Hearings and Adjudications and participated in EPA's Region 1 Enforcement and Compliance Assurance monthly meetings.
- For Environmental Review, OPPD:
 - Developed a virtual Quality Assurance training for the agency, targeting EPA-delegated programs;
 - Served as the Performance Partnership Agreement/Grant central point of contact with the EPA;
 - Participated on the 5G Council and conducted 1 application review;
 - Provided comment on 13 State projects under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act (CEPA), as well as 1 Record of Decision, 1 EIE review, and 1 Scoping Notice;
 - Provided comment on 1 project subject to the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA);
 - Submitted comments for 7 projects to the Connecticut Siting Council on behalf of the Agency for solar and energy storage projects of more than 5 megawatts;
 - Participated in the annual (Round 4) SCEF bid procurement process, which included finalizing bid questions and scoring 21 confidential bid submissions;
 - Provided review and approval of 10 lake drawdown requests from lake associations and municipalities;
 - Coordinated 8 authorizations of aquatic pesticide application on state-owned waterbodies with the Pesticides, Wildlife, and Fisheries Divisions;
 - Reviewed Landfill preferences for 10 NNRES bids to BETP;
 - Reviewed 1 Neighborhood Revitalization Zone plan;
 - Reviewed 4 state surplus land transfers; and
 - Assisted DECD in environmental review of 15 Community Challenge Grants.
- The Pollution Prevention (P2) program within OPPD provides the business sector (mostly small and mid-sized) with outreach, education, and technical assistance to promote the voluntary reduction of hazardous chemicals, solid and hazardous wastes,

GHG emissions from energy efficiency, water pollution, and conservation. P2 is currently focused on encouraging sustainability at breweries and distilleries across the state and addresses other pollution prevent programs for the state:

- Applied for the competitive US EPA P2 grant for states - the grant total is \$400,000 (includes state matching funds) and was awarded in October 2022, with an ending date of October 2024. The grant supports technical assistance and outreach to food and beverage manufactures in the state and targets breweries.
- Assisted three breweries with reducing wastewater pollution - including baseline sampling, providing each with best practices to implement, and post-implementation sampling to determine results. Two breweries had significant reductions in Biological Oxygen Demand (55% and 77% reductions), Chemical Oxygen Demand (28% and 85%), as well as Ammonia, Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Total Suspended Solids.
- Conducted three case studies on reducing wastewater pollution from breweries, which will be published on DEEP's Pollution Prevention webpage and widely distributed to the industry and consultants.
- Worked in conjunction with the other New England states and developed CT/NE's Sustainable Craft Beverage program to provide assistance and recognition to breweries that reduce their environmental impact (manage resources efficiently, minimize waste and the use of toxic products).
- Coordinated DEEP's Green Lodging program - a total of 14 facilities were certified in 2023. These facilities saved approximately \$186,004 from energy and water conservation measures, reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 2,715 Metric Tons of CO2 equivalent, reduced water by 24 million gallons, and decreased solid waste generated by over 1 ton.
- Continued to assist state agencies with achieving the Sustainable Materials Management goals set out in Executive Order 1/GreenerGov CT - CT Valley Hospital's new food waste program began in Sept 2022 and diverts approximately 4,000 lbs/wk to Quantum Biopower in Southington. The Center for Environmental Technology published an article on this effort. Future work will be with a Department of Corrections facility in Enfield for food waste collection.
- Four guidance documents were added to the Agency Resource section of Greener Gov CT, including *How to Start a Green Team*, *How to Recycle at Your Agency*, *How to Start a ReSupply Center*, and a checklist for Sustainable Purchasing by state agencies.
- OPPD's Permit Assistance program is utilized more than ever due to the uptick of development projects, enhanced promotion of its services, and improvements in the transparency of the permitting process for applicants. OPPD:
 - Held 95 multimedia pre-application meetings, and
 - Created dashboards to track metrics on Permit Assistance client satisfaction permit processing timeframes, processing of legacy permits, and regulatory adoption.
- OPPD's Client Concierge Service focuses on providing additional assistance to particularly time-sensitive, complex projects that require multiple permits.

- Examples of projects include Bridgeport’s Barnum Landing offshore wind staging area, Amtrak’s Connecticut River Bridge project, Gravel Pit Solar in Windsor, and NVCOC’s Kinneytown dam removal.
- The Concierge Team published Virtual Brochure No. 3, highlighting important permitting information and projects in Connecticut.
- Published a sector factsheet on environmental permitting and pollution prevention at breweries and distilleries.
- OPPD has been an integral part of multiple stakeholder engagement groups garnering input from the regulated community on topics such as solar development, offshore wind, and environmental justice. In particular, the cross-agency team for Sustainable, Transparent, and Efficient Practices for Solar Siting developed a Draft Guidance for Siting Solar on Brownfields and held a Siting Workshop for Renewable Energy.

Equity and Environmental Justice Office

- Coordinated the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC), a council established by EO 21-3 within DEEP to advise the Commissioner on current and historic environmental injustice, pollution reduction, energy equity, climate change mitigation and resiliency, health disparities, and racial inequity. Three Subcommittees were launched on Air, Water and Waste giving CEEJAC members the opportunity to give the Agency feedback on projects, programs, and legislative proposals. The full CEEJAC meets quarterly.
- Organized a webinar presentation by staff from the USEPA on federal grant dollars available to environmental justice communities.
- Along with the University of Connecticut’s Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), developed the first iterations of an “Environmental Justice Mapping Tool” to identify vulnerable populations that may be disproportionately impacted by pollution, health disparities and climate change. This tool will enable the public to access demographic, health, and potential pollution sources across the state of Connecticut.
- Maintain a GIS map reflecting CGS § 22a-20a that shows communities identified as environmental justice communities and the large emitters of pollution, defined as “affecting facilities,” located in environmental justice communities. This tool is used by environmental organizations, neighborhood communities, academia, industry, financial institutions, consultants, attorneys, green industry businesses and local, state, and federal agencies.
- Continued to facilitate DEEP’s participation in the Native American Heritage Advisory Council to preserve tribal history and archeological artifacts, and to support state and federal tribes in these efforts.
- Worked with the State-recognized tribes and the State Historic Preservation Office to assess and protect historic cultural resources and make infrastructure improvements on reservations.
- Exercised oversight over public engagement and participation with respect to permitting and provided assistance to industry and department’s permitting and program staff to ensure meaningful public participation in the community. The EJ Office developed

additional guidance for industry on how to schedule and hold public meetings in person and remotely.

- Served on numerous environmental, conservation, municipal and civil rights boards and commissions to advise and support diversity, inclusion, and equity throughout the state.
- Supported DEEP's Urban Green and Community Gardens Grant Program, which provided funding assistance to develop or enhance urban open spaces for public enjoyment and/or environmental education.
- Strove to provide access to Limited English Proficiency persons—decreasing language barriers and translating outreach materials and publications.
- Provided support and technical assistance to the community concerned with the expansion of Tweed Airport.
- Performed outreach and assisted in coordinating meetings in to respond and address the concerns with flooding in homes and businesses in North Hartford.
- Address community residents' environmental issues (air quality, wildlife, recreation and quality of life).
- The Office of Equity & Environmental Justice (OEEJ) will continue to leverage resources from the Department of Consumer Protection, Department of Public Health, Attorney General's Office, The Department of Public Safety and the Department of Criminal Justice and other state and local government agencies to enforce environmental regulations.
- Conduct inspections and coordinate with DEEP staff, municipalities and local law enforcement to address flooding, illegal dumping, quality of life issues, housing contamination, illegal car repair, mismanagement of solid waste, and electric suppliers.
- In partnership with the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History co-sponsored the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Environmental and Social Justice event.
- Continued engagement with neighborhood and community organizations:
 - Stamford South End NRZ Initiative
 - Bridgeport East Side NRZ
 - Hartford Friends of Keney Park (serve as an advisor)
 - Watershed Planning & Management Division on the Mill River Urban Watershed Initiative (UWI) – expand their activities into environmental justice communities.
 - Bloomfield Lisa Lane Farm Community Garden Program
 - National Science Foundation Innovative Technology Experiences for Students & Teachers Engaging Underrepresented
 - Eastern CT Land Trusts
 - Bridgeport Ground Work
- Increased outreach to environmental justice communities through:
 - CEEJAC updates and resources
 - Environmental education programs
 - CARE - Urban Fishing Programs; Keney Park Pond Fish Stocking program (over 20,000 trout and catfish have been stocked since 2007)
 - Weatherization assistance program funding
 - Green Bank Initiatives
 - Geospatial Measurement of Air Pollution (GMAP)
 - Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA)
 - Urban Green & Community Garden Program (UGCG)

- Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge – Cops & Bobbers, Hooks & Ladders annual event at Keney Park Pond (Hartford Law Enforcement and Fire Departments engage with youth attendees)
- Pollution prevention
- Develop tools and create partnerships to Increase staff diversity:
 - Developed a career brochure featuring employees of color.
 - Partnered with the Historically Black Colleges & Universities Connect
 - Utilized Hartford’s 89.9 WQTQ as a resource for recruitment and community participation in DEEP’s programs.
 - Ongoing outreach and recruitment efforts with the Bureau of Natural Resources in targeting sources to recruit a diverse applicant pool for seasonal and full-time employment.
 - Employment opportunities to underserve communities and faith base organizations.
 - Coordinate career and educational with A. I. Prince Technical School Bioscience & Environmental students
 - Served on the Career Technical Education Advisory Committee – a pathway to DEEP’s careers and employment opportunities for urban youth
- Participate in the All States, Regional, and the Office of Resource Conservation & Recovery Environmental Justice monthly meetings
- Served on the planning committee of the Youth Climate Summit
- Assisted in the Connecticut Environmental Literacy Plan review and update.
- Submitted a proposal for the Friends of Keney Park Nature Project
- Mentored a student to apply for the National Youth Environmental Advisory Council

Land Acquisition and Management Office

- Recognizing the threat of loss or degradation of natural resources due to land-use change and development, the General Assembly set a goal of preserving 21% of Connecticut’s land base as public open space (CGS § 23-8). The Connecticut Comprehensive Open Space Acquisition Plan set a target to meet this goal by year 2023. To reach this goal, 673,210 acres across the state needs to be acquired as open space. Of the total open space goal:
 - 10% (320,576 acres) shall be held by the State of Connecticut (DEEP), and
 - 11% (352,634 acres) shall be held by DEEP’s land conservation Partners (municipalities, non-profit land conservation organizations, and water companies).
- At the end of 2022, DEEP and its partners together held a combined 515,884 acres as public open space: 76.67% of the way towards achieving the total statewide open space acquisition goal. DEEP must acquire 56,889 more acres and DEEP’s partners must acquire 100,437 more acres.
- *State (DEEP) Open Space:* As of December 31, 2022 DEEP held an estimated 263,687 acres of land in its system of Parks, Forests, and Wildlife Management and water access areas: 82% of its open space goal. In 2022, DEEP acquired 587.4 acres, adding to Connecticut’s network of Parks, Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, water access, and

other publicly available open space areas. DEEP utilizes state bond funds through the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program combined with Federal funding through the Highlands Conservation Act, the Forest Legacy Program, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Long Island Sound Grant, in addition to private funding – maximizing the impact of state dollars.

- *Partner-held Open Space:* As of December 31, 2022, DEEP conservatively estimates that its partners held 252,197 acres: 71.5%, of their share of the statewide open space goal. Of this, non-profit land conservation organizations held about 69,410 acres, municipalities held 85,012 acres, and water companies held 97,775 acres as open space.
- DEEP also manages the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant program (OSWA), which provides financial assistance to municipalities and nonprofit land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space. Properties acquired through the OSWA program are protected with conservation easements – ensuring that they are open to the public and preserved as open space in perpetuity.
- The goals of the OSWA program extend beyond an acreage number. It is just as important to focus on where open space is conserved as it is to focus on how many acres are conserved. DEEP is especially focused on increasing our efforts to conserve open space in and around cities to ensure everyone across the state has equal access to open space. Before the 2021 OSWA grant round, DEEP revamped the OSWA scoring criteria, which previously favored larger parcels in rural areas. The goal was to make the scoring more equitable so smaller lots in urban centers could compete with larger parcels in more rural areas of the state. Examples of changes to the scoring criteria include considerations for public transit accessibility and population density. DEEP is considering additional changes to the program to make it more equitable across the state.

Office of Adjudications

The Office of Adjudications conducts hearings and issues written decisions in contested cases regarding environmental permitting, licensing, and enforcement matters where such hearings are requested by a party or the public or required by law. The Office of Adjudications also offers mediation services to all areas of the DEEP.

In the FY 2022-2023, the Office of Adjudications:

- o Adjudicated one contested permit matter involving a DOT project for the construction of an existing bridge in Old Saybrook.
- o Facilitated two informational hearings in lieu of contested hearings for permit matters.
- o Mediated six matters between DEEP and outside parties, resolving two hearing requests.
- o Adjudicated three Boating License Suspensions pursuant to General Statutes §15-140q.
- o Adjudicated three Hunting License Suspensions pursuant to General Statutes §26-62.

- o Adjudicated one Underground Storage Tank matter and mediated seventy-four cases pursuant to General Statutes § 22a-449(g).
- o Facilitated monthly hunting and fishing panels, as requested, with Wildlife, EnCon, and Fishing divisions.
- o Provided five training sessions regarding the Adjudication process to interested parties, such as DEEP staff and other state agencies.
- o The Office of Adjudications has ongoing projects to address public access to information for open and closed matters, including a public facing filing system, to allow all members of the public to access docket information and provide parties an electronic method for filing material with the Hearing Officer.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute - Include any other information required by state statute to be in the annual report.