



To: Honorable Co-Chairs and members of the Appropriations Committee
From: Lori Brown, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters
RE: **DEEP Funding and The Council on Environmental Quality**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of increased funding for the protection of our land, air, water, wildlife and climate. While CTLCV has not yet fully reviewed the Governor's budget for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), we have always been a strong supporter of Department and its mission.

The anticipated retirement "cliff" at DEEP will present a challenge to the agency, making adequate funding for new staff and technological resources extremely important if it is to continue to carry out its important work.

Related to DEEP's mission is that of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which is funded through the Passport to Parks Fund that is administered by DEEP.

CEQ is the only government entity able to effectively report on how well our state is doing in protecting our land, air, water, wildlife and climate. The Council's official "State of the Environment" report is widely recognized as being a consistently accurate and objective assessment.

CEQ provides critical information on specific problems the state is either currently grappling with or may not be aware of. These "Special Reports" have helped **identify solutions** to a range of issues, including water quality, protection of state conservation lands, invasive species, illegal tree cutting, land boundary encroachments, ATVs, air quality permits, gravel mining, mercury pollution, environmental regulation, modernizing the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act, conservation of inland wetlands, goals for state parks, and exposure to toxic chemicals.

A special report in 2021 included recommendations that helped update the "Bottle Bill". And in January of this year, CEQ released a new report on the problem of Invasive species to help inform our state leaders on legislation to address this issue.

These reports often include recommendations for correcting deficiencies in state environmental laws and programs which have led to many improvements in our environment.

The CEQ investigates and helps resolve hundreds of citizen complaints. Navigating our state’s regulations and the jurisdictions of various state agencies can leave the average citizen (and even the seasoned advocate) confused and unable to participate in resolving issues in their town or region. CEQ is an accessible and efficient entity to which citizens can bring complicated issues and get answers. CEQ offers unsurpassed knowledge and institutional “memory” to understand and address issues—no other entity in the state provides this critical service for people and the environment.

In addition to its irreplaceable role as an investigator of citizen complaints and producing an annual report on the state of the environment, the **CEQ produces a bi-monthly Environmental Monitor to ensure transparency of our state’s actions regarding projects, permits and enforcement.**

Possibly the most important function of the Council is to review and comment on state construction projects, agency **Environmental Impact Evaluations**, environmental policies and programs, and on proposals to the Siting Council for telecommunication and energy projects (pursuant to [CGS Sec. 16-50j.](#))

In 2021, CEQ reviewed 40 project filings to the Siting Council and commented on 18 projects to assist that agency **minimize potential adverse environmental impacts**. These comments to the Siting Council usually result in interrogatories to the applicants and often to changes in the project design.

CEQ is a uniquely important state agency to help our state identify and address the worst, unchecked attacks on Connecticut’s increasingly threatened natural resources.

Thank you for considering the future of Connecticut’s environment in your budget deliberations.

Lori Brown, Executive Director
CT League of Conservation Voters
553 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
860-236-5442
ctlcv@ctlcv.org
ww.ctlcv.org