



TESTIMONY

SB 924

AAC The Staffing and Resources of the Department of Environmental Protection

March 19, 2021

To: Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Gresko, Vice Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Miner and Rep. Harding, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of CTLCV, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 924 to ensure that DEEP is properly funded, staffed, and equipped with adequate resources to protect our environment and public health.

CTLCV is encouraged to see a bill that addresses the resources of DEEP. There has never been a more important time for this agency to be well supported and fully capable of responding to climate change. We need more baseline data and more ability to monitor changes--good and bad--whether they be contamination, increased flooding, droughts, or wildlife die off. We need DEEP programs and staff to respond to adverse changes and to promote resiliency.

This is the time to reverse the recent trend of removing resources from DEEP. CTLCV hopes that the purpose of the report called for in SB 924 is to **identify where additional funding and support is most needed, and the means of providing it.**

It has been well documented that programs on the regulatory side of DEEP monitoring the quality of our public trust resources in air, soil, and water have been understaffed and are in need of programmatic improvements. For example, an improvement of this type is the work currently being done to update the Transfer Act. Far more resources and staff are needed for performance assessments and enforcement of this and other programs.

Well run regulatory programs protect resources and are a net cost savings to the state. DEEP has critical responsibilities of enforcing environmental laws that protect the quality of our land, water, wildlife, air and climate, and its resources should be a top priority for the legislature. Thank you.

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