

**Statement of Amey Marrella
Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
Committee on Executive and Legislative Nominations
Feb. 11, 2010**

Thank you Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, and members of the committee. It is a great honor to appear before you today as Governor Rell's nominee for the position of Commissioner for Environmental Protection.

Since I was a child, I have cared passionately about environmental protection, an interest nurtured by regular hiking and camping trips with my family. As an adult, I have dedicated my career to government work, out of a great respect for our democratic institutions and the importance of public service. I have served as an attorney at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as First Selectman of Woodbridge, and more recently as Deputy Commissioner at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Should you approve my nomination, I promise to continue bringing this combination of passion and dedication to the job every day.

There is no doubt that our state government faces extraordinarily difficult times; however, at DEP we are determined to continue fulfilling our mission of "conserving, protecting and improving the natural resources and environment of this state..." notwithstanding current fiscal constraints. Achieving this goal requires us to look inward, to make certain we are operating as effectively as possible, as well as look outward, to engage all possible partners in our efforts.

To put our own house in order, DEP has successfully launched a LEAN initiative. LEAN is a process improvement approach that relies upon the agency's staff – the people who know our work best – to identify wasted time and effort and recommend ways to eliminate them.

Since we launched our LEAN commitment in June 2008, DEP staff have identified and achieved significant efficiencies in processes across our agency – from water quality enforcement to dock permitting to fish stocking practices. With the help of LEAN, we are finding ways to issue permits more quickly, reduce our enforcement backlogs, and conduct more and better inspections. For example, DEP's Stormwater Permitting unit has reduced the time it takes to review responses to violations by 81%, DEP's Inland Water unit has reduced the sufficiency review time of various permits by 67%, and coastal permits are being issued five times faster than before. All of these achievements are a result of LEAN, and we will continue to implement LEAN throughout the agency.

Beyond making specific processes more efficient, LEAN brings added value by helping our most important resource – our staff – have time to address additional important environmental work. And we have a lot of work to do. To achieve our mission, the Department must respond to new environmental challenges – such as invasive species, storm water quality and quantity, and climate change – while continuing

to make progress on challenges that date to the 1970s – such as ozone pollution and the health of Long Island Sound. On the Environmental Conservation side of the agency, we need to offer satisfying and safe outdoor experiences to hikers, beachgoers, campers, boaters, and sportsmen throughout the vast acreage that comprises our state parks, forests and swimming areas. Outdoor fun offers our citizens a welcome respite from the daily demands of life and helps inspire the environmental stewards of the future.

Moving outside our agency, it is especially important in these tough economic times for DEP to work with many partners to foster sustainable growth and a vibrant, green economy. As former DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy repeatedly stated, economic growth and environmental protection are complementary goals, not competing interests. To foster both goals, we will continue to coordinate our efforts with others to promote Responsible Growth and sound energy planning. We will also continue to offer guidance and compliance assistance to the business sector, and applaud the sustainable efforts of Connecticut businesses large and small.

Because some of Connecticut's environmental challenges must be addressed beyond our State's borders, the Department must remain engaged in regional and national partnerships to achieve environmental results. Prevailing winds transport ozone, acid rain, and mercury into our state from other locations. Wastewater practices in other states affect the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. National policy impacts our mobile source inventory, federal grant funding, and fishing harvests. As Commissioner, I will continue to participate in the Ozone Transport Commission, Environmental Council of States, and other regional and national forums to make certain Connecticut's voice is heard and our concerns are addressed.

There is one other critical partner that DEP must engage in our efforts to preserve and protect the environment and natural resources of Connecticut. That partner is the people of Connecticut – you, me, everyone who lives here. It is increasingly clear that we will enjoy clean water, clean air and clean lands only if each of us makes daily choices that are smart for the environment.

In reaching out to the public, the Department relies on education and marketing. We are deploying internet tools to promote awareness and encourage stewardship, such as our newly-launched CT ECO webpage that provides usable environmental data to the public and local officials. We are also continuing to implement our nationally recognized "No Child Left Inside" initiative, which connects children with our natural environment. As part of "No Child Left Inside", we just held our fourth Winter Festival on Saturday February 6th and we will launch our 5th annual Great Park Pursuit for families on Saturday, May 8th. We are also continuing various awards programs, such as our Green Circle Awards, that offer a chance to thank businesses and local organizations for their environmental stewardship.

The upcoming 40th anniversary of Earth Day, on April 22, 2010, offers a perfect opportunity to remind every "Nutmegger" of simple steps they can take to help protect the environment – for example, by using reusable grocery bags, recycling more, and

choosing energy star appliances. Because this one day, like the very first Earth Day, can spark a change in individual behavior that will have a lasting positive effect, DEP will be coordinating special events and activities to mark this historic anniversary.

The 40th anniversary of Earth Day will be an occasion to remind everyone in Connecticut of the tremendous strides our state has made since the first Earth Day in 1970. In four decades, we have improved the quality of our air and waters, protected many valuable acres as open space, and transformed business practices.

At the same time, we have a lot more work to do by 2020, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. To protect and enhance our quality of life, we must continue in the next ten years to place a high value on environmental protection and keep moving forward to address environmental challenges. We don't have the luxury of letting our focus ebb and flow because ultimately environmental protection is about protecting the resources and future of our state and the health and well being of all our citizens.

With your support, I very much look forward to addressing these challenges as Commissioner of DEP. I thank you for this opportunity to address your committee and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.