



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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QUESTIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NOMINEE

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) was formed by PA 11-80, which merged the former departments of Public Utility Control (DPUC) and Environmental Protection. The former DPUC commissioners now serve as the directors of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), which is within DEEP.

DEEP's energy goals are to: (1) reduce utility rates and decrease ratepayer costs, (2) ensure the reliability and safety of the state's energy supply, (3) increase the use of clean energy, and (4) create jobs and develop the state's energy-related economy. DEEP's environmental goals are to: (1) conserve, improve, and protect the state's natural resources and environment and (2) preserve the natural environment while fostering sustainable development.

QUESTIONS FOR THE NOMINEE

General Questions

1. The governor's proposed budget cuts DEEP's FY 13 General Fund budget from \$76.2 million to \$69.8 million, with a \$4.4 million cut in personal services. If the final budget has a comparable cut, what specific efficiencies are you contemplating to avoid cuts in service? If cuts cannot be avoided, where would you make them?
2. Prior to your initial appointment as commissioner, you advised business and governmental clients as a private consultant. How will you ensure that DEEP remains impartial towards your former clients?

Energy Issues

1. What tasks assigned to DEEP under PA 11-80 (the major energy bill of last session) has it accomplished to date? Where is DEEP running behind schedule and why? Have there been any problems or difficulties in the transition period?
2. Under PA 11-80, DEEP is responsible for developing energy policy, while PURA is responsible for regulatory issues that affect utility rates. Does this arrangement provide sufficient autonomy to PURA? On the other hand, does it potentially allow PURA to muddle policy decisions made by DEEP? Would the model used by the former Department of Environmental Protection in which hearing officers heard contested cases be appropriate for the energy side of DEEP?
3. You have made extensive changes in the former DPUC, moving a significant number of staff over to DEEP's Bureau of Energy & Technology. Is the remaining staff at PURA sufficient to do its work effectively?
4. Should the state actively encourage people to switch from oil to natural gas for home heating in light of natural gas' lower greenhouse gas emissions?
5. What are DEEP's major recommendations on ensuring electric reliability in the wake of last year's outages?

Environmental Issues

1. Under what circumstances is it appropriate for DEEP to exchange or sell land that was given to it for conservation purposes?
2. Sunday hunting has long been a contentious issue in Connecticut. What is DEEP's position on Sunday deer hunting, which is now illegal? If allowed, what can be done to ensure the safety of hikers?
3. Using outdoor wood burning furnaces is a controversial issue in Connecticut. Should the state prohibit their use or limit their operation?
4. Mandatory recycling has been the law in Connecticut for over 20 years but the recycling rate remains near 30%. What steps can DEEP take to increase the state's recycling rate?
5. The legislature recently announced the formation of a shoreline preservation task force to study storm impacts on Connecticut's shoreline. What environmental and energy-related issues should the task force consider when conducting its examination?
6. What are the major obstacles for brownfield redevelopment in Connecticut? Does Connecticut's organizational structure for brownfield redevelopment help or hinder their remediation?
7. DEEP is using a process improvement approach called LEAN to increase department efficiency. How successful has DEEP's LEAN process been at revising the permitting process?

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