



Connecticut Department of  
**ENERGY &  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing – March 11, 2014  
Program Review and Investigations Committee

Testimony Submitted by Interim Commissioner Robert J. Klee

**Raised House Bill No. 5370 - AA IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE PERFORMANCE OF CONNECTICUT'S STATE PARKS**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised House Bill No. 5370 - AA IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE PERFORMANCE OF CONNECTICUT'S STATE PARKS. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

DEEP appreciates the spirit of this proposed bill, and its goal of providing additional resources for the staffing and operation of our system of 107 state parks and 32 state forests. However, we cannot support the proposals in this bill.

Sections one and three of the bill are the primary recommendations of the Program Review and Investigation (PRI) staff report on the funding of Connecticut's state parks. These sections would direct between 25 and 50% of the revenue generated at state parks back to the DEEP to provide additional resources, primarily for the hiring of needed field staff in our parks. These sections would also direct that DEEP develop a Results Based Accountability (RBA) style report card in coordination with the Appropriations Committee.

DEEP supports Governor Malloy's proposed budget adjustments for FY 15. The proposals before you would change a system of budgeting that has balanced the needs of our state parks with other needs of the state, including other needs of DEEP.

Section two of the bill would allow park units who are successful in achieving non-personnel budget savings to retain those funds for use in their parks. While recognizing the positive intentions of the proposal we cannot support it at this time.

Section three directs the DEEP Commissioner to present a budget request directly to the Appropriations Committee to include this additional funding for the FY 2016-2017 biennium. There are two primary concerns about this approach. First, this is a significant departure from current practice, where an agency's Commissioner makes a budget request to the Governor and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), and subsequently a comprehensive state-wide biennial budget proposal is made by the Governor to the legislature for their consideration. This would put the DEEP Commissioner in a position of either proposing a budget that differs from that of the person who has appointed him or her to the position, or of coordinating with OPM as DEEP now does. The former is not a viable approach.

Section three of the bill directs DEEP to present a plan to the Environment and Appropriations Committees a plan for the use of any additional funds DEEP receives for parks. DEEP would welcome the opportunity to develop and present a plan to the Office of Policy and Management and the relevant Committees of the General Assembly for any new funds DEEP receives in support of its parks, forests, and environmental conservation mission

We would also welcome the opportunity to continue to work with the Committee, the Governor's office and OPM to advance our shared goal of providing the resources needed to support our treasured state parks in the context of a state still dealing with the budget impacts of the Recession of 2008.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Robert LaFrance, DEEP's Director of Governmental Affairs, at 860.424.3401 or [Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov](mailto:Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov) (or, Elizabeth McAuliffe, DEEP Legislative Liaison, at 860.424.3458 or [Elizabeth.McAuliffe@ct.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.McAuliffe@ct.gov)).