



QUESTIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NOMINEE

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) 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. Its 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.

The DEEP commissioner is responsible for implementing the state's energy and environmental policies; coordinating the management of water, land, and air resources; protecting plants and all types of wildlife, including the preservation of endangered species; providing for pollution abatement, controlling pests, and regulating pesticide use; regulating waste disposal; developing a comprehensive energy plan for the state; transitioning the state to cleaner, more diverse and sustainable energy sources; and creating opportunities for energy conservation and cost reduction ([CGS § 16a-14](#) and [§ 22a-5](#)).

QUESTIONS FOR THE NOMINEE

General Questions

1. Now that over two years have passed since the merger of the former Department of Environmental Protection and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), do you think that the two agencies are successfully coexisting? What have been the greatest challenges in merging the departments?
2. In your prior role as chief of staff to former Commissioner Esty, what was your level of involvement in DEEP's day-to-day operations? How has this prepared you to take over as commissioner?
3. You were quoted in the media as wanting to focus on "execution, implementation and delivery" ([CT Mirror, 01/24/2014](#)). Can you (1) elaborate on what this means and (2) describe your priorities for the agency?
4. Connecticut has had a focus on energy policy over the past three years. Some people have suggested that environmental protection has taken on a lesser role as a result. How do you respond to this?

Energy Issues

1. Does PURA, which is responsible for regulatory issues affecting utility rates, have sufficient autonomy from DEEP's energy policy-making branch? Are there times when PURA's decisions are at cross-purposes with DEEP's energy policy? How will you balance any potential conflicts?
2. Capacity on the interstate gas pipeline system is almost fully used during periods of high demand. Independent System Operator-New England, which runs the regional electric wholesale market, has expressed concern about growing reliance of electric generators on natural gas bought under contracts where supply can be curtailed during high-demand periods. What can the state do to address this vulnerability, particularly given the increased demand in the state for gas for home heating?
3. How would you characterize DEEP's progress in testing and expanding distributed generation and microgrids to bolster the resiliency of Connecticut's electricity system? What actions should DEEP take in the short- and long-term toward this effort?
4. Currently, commercial and industrial customers can choose their gas supplier. Should choice be extended to residential customers?

5. How can DEEP (1) promote the use of smart meters and smart appliances in low-income communities and (2) address barriers that exist in these communities that often prevent them from benefitting from programs that promote energy efficiency?
6. Among DEEP's energy-related goals are reducing utility rates and decreasing ratepayer costs. What steps would you implement as DEEP commissioner to achieve these goals?

Environmental Issues

1. Under what circumstances is it appropriate for DEEP to exchange or sell land that was given to it for conservation purposes? Are there lands that the state should seek to preserve in perpetuity? If so, can you provide some examples?
2. Access to water is a major issue for communities and businesses in several parts of the state because it requires balancing commercial, recreational, and ecological needs. How can Connecticut strike a balance among these needs and encourage both business and environmental conservation?
3. Last year marked the centennial anniversary for Connecticut's park and forest system. In recent years, there has been increasing concern over funding for the state's parks and forests. How can the state ensure adequate funding for their operation and maintenance?
4. Governor's Bill 27 proposes creating a successor authority to the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority. Why is this succession needed and how would it affect solid waste management in the state?
5. What is the department's position on the use of fracking waste in Connecticut? And, in your opinion, are these waste products related to any environmental or public safety hazards?
6. Black bears have been appearing in residential neighborhoods with increasing frequency. At what point would the department consider introducing a bear hunt to manage the population?

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