

**Appropriations Committee
March 2, 2015
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Budget Public Hearing**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Stephen Anderson and I am the President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents thousands of workers employed in state and municipal government, and in the private sector, hundreds of whom work in Conservation and Development agencies, employed at the Department Energy and Environmental Protection, the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, the Department of Agriculture, and in other areas of state government.

Today, I want to talk to you about staffing and about investments in our natural resources. As you will hear from several of our members either through written or in-person testimony today, our largest Conservation & Development agency, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is severely understaffed – the same can be said in other agencies as well. This budget does nothing to help this situation and actually goes in the wrong direction, closing the Kensington Fish Hatchery, transferring the Council on Environmental Quality and proposing funding cuts in other areas that will adversely affect the work performed by CSEA members, not just in DEEP but in other agencies as well.

Further, the budget transfers more than \$40 million from the Community Investment Account over the biennium to the General Fund. The Community Investment Act, passed in 2005 with wide bipartisan support, is landmark legislation that helps further the goals of protecting and preserving the natural beauty of the State of Connecticut for future generations.

Through fees assessed when filing documents with city and town clerks throughout Connecticut, the Community Investment Act earmarks funds for the Departments of Agriculture, Energy and Environmental Protection, Economic and Community Development and Housing to use for acquisition of open space, farmland preservation, preservation of historic sites, creation of additional affordable housing programs, and for various other purposes as prescribed by the statute.

Where I work, at the Department of Agriculture, farmland preservation funds have helped us reach the milestone of protecting over 40,000 acres of farmland on some 300 farms with the help of these funds. While we fully realize that Governor Malloy (and now you) have tough choices to make this year, our members, some who are paid from these funds and have worked in these areas for many years, do not want to lose momentum in these important programs and would like to see this funding remain intact.

As you craft your budget, we hope you will look closely at both the staffing situation in these agencies, and the maintenance of these important investments. Further, as we move forward with new legislative initiatives (the transportation plan being one of them), we ask that you examine the

resources in the affected programs to ensure they have the necessary staffing to take on any additional work.

CSEA SEIU Local 2001 has several items on our legislative agenda that will help reduce the financial difficulties currently faced by the state. We have provided testimony on a number of these items, especially the use of expensive outside consultants at the Department of Transportation where significant savings could be achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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Sec. 4-66aa. Community investment account. Distribution of funds. (a) There is established, within the General Fund, a separate, nonlapsing account to be known as the "community investment account". The account shall contain any moneys required by law to be deposited in the account. The funds in the account shall be distributed every three months as follows: (1) Ten dollars of each fee credited to said account shall be deposited into the agriculture sustainability account established pursuant to section 4-66cc and, then, of the remaining funds, (2) twenty-five per cent to the Department of Economic and Community Development to use as follows: (A) Two hundred thousand dollars, annually, to supplement the technical assistance and preservation activities of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, established pursuant to special act 75-93, and (B) the remainder to supplement historic preservation activities as provided in sections 10-409 to 10-415, inclusive; (3) twenty-five per cent to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to supplement new or existing affordable housing programs; (4) twenty-five per cent to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for municipal open space grants; and (5) twenty-five per cent to the Department of Agriculture to use as follows: (A) Five hundred thousand dollars annually for the agricultural viability grant program established pursuant to section 22-26j; (B) five hundred thousand dollars annually for the farm transition program established pursuant to section 22-26k; (C) one hundred thousand dollars annually to encourage the sale of Connecticut Grown food to schools, restaurants, retailers and other institutions and businesses in the state; (D) seventy-five thousand dollars annually for the Connecticut farm link program established pursuant to section 22-26l; (E) forty-seven thousand five hundred dollars annually for the Seafood Advisory Council established pursuant to section 22-455; (F) forty-seven thousand five hundred dollars annually for the Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council established pursuant to section 22-26c; (G) twenty-five thousand dollars annually to the Connecticut Food Policy Council established pursuant to section 22-456; and (H) the remainder for farmland preservation programs pursuant to chapter 422. Each agency receiving funds under this section may use not more than ten per cent of such funds for administration of the programs for which the funds were provided.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, from July 1, 2009, until July 1, 2011, the funds in the community investment account established pursuant to said subsection shall be distributed every three months as follows: (1) Twenty per cent to the Department of Economic and Community Development to use as follows: (A) Two hundred thousand dollars, annually, to supplement the technical assistance and preservation activities of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, established pursuant to special act 75-93, and (B) the remainder to supplement historic preservation activities as provided in sections 10-409 to 10-415, inclusive; (2) twenty per cent to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to supplement new or existing affordable housing programs; (3) twenty per cent to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for municipal open space grants; and (4) forty per cent to the Department of Agriculture to use as follows: (A) One hundred twenty-five thousand dollars, quarterly, for the agricultural viability grant program established pursuant to section 22-26j; (B) one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars, quarterly, for the farm transition program established pursuant to section 22-26k; (C) twenty-five thousand dollars, quarterly, to encourage the sale of Connecticut Grown food to schools, restaurants, retailers, and other institutions and businesses in the state; (D) eighteen thousand seven hundred fifty dollars, quarterly, for the Connecticut farm link program established pursuant to section 22-26l; (E) twelve thousand five hundred dollars, quarterly, for Urban Oaks Organic Farm; (F) eleven thousand eight hundred seventy-five dollars, quarterly, for the Seafood Advisory Council

established pursuant to section 22-455; (G) eleven thousand eight hundred seventy-five dollars, quarterly, to the Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council established pursuant to section 22-26c; (H) six thousand two hundred fifty dollars, quarterly, to the Connecticut Food Policy Council established pursuant to section 22-456; and (I) the remainder each quarter to the agricultural sustainability account established pursuant to section 4-66c. Each agency receiving funds under this section may use not more than ten per cent of such funds for administration of the programs for which the funds were provided, except the Department of Agriculture may also use such funds for the administration of farmland preservation programs pursuant to chapter 422.

