



Connecticut Department of

**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

Robert J. Klee, Commissioner

**Public Hearing – February 29, 2015
Committee on Executive and Legislative Nominations**

Statement of Commissioner Robert J. Klee

Chairmen Duff and Janowski, Ranking Members Kane and Buck-Taylor, and members of the Committee on Executive and Legislative Nominations....I thank you for inviting me here today.

It has been an honor to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) over the past year and to lead the professional, dedicated and mission-driven staff of DEEP.

It has been an honor working with all of you, and your colleagues in this General Assembly.

It has been an honor to serve in the Administration of Governor Malloy who has given his Commissioners the opportunity to help build a more prosperous, fulfilling, and sustainable future for all of our residents.

And finally, it has been an honor to serve the people of Connecticut, to roll up my sleeves on their behalf every day, as we chart the best course for our state when it comes to complex and critical energy and environmental issues.

As you know, DEEP was created less than four years ago to better address the interrelatedness of energy and environmental issues with an understanding that how we use energy, and where that energy comes from has significant impacts on our environment.

Prior to 2011, there was no state agency with a focus on energy policy and Connecticut paid the price in terms of rates and lack of vision for the future.

A refocused utility regulatory authority was included under the DEEP umbrella, enabling the energy policy and regulation arms of our government to work together in a manner that reaps the advantages of ongoing contact and communication – but that preserves the required independence of regulators when they are in the midst of formal proceedings.

There have been great benefits in having colleagues within the same agency, but with different areas of expertise, work through policy and decisions together.

Printed on Recycled Paper

79 Elm Street • Hartford, CT 06106-5127
www.ct.gov/deep

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

We can see these advantages, for instance, when it comes to developing strategies to combat climate change – where we can freely tap the expertise of energy strategists to help us reduce harmful carbon emissions.

And, when it comes to the adaptation side of climate, we can easily tap the knowledge of staff familiar with a wide range of issues and challenges facing everything from Long Island Sound and our forests and lands, to inland waters, fisheries, and wildlife.

As I prepared for today and scanned back over DEEP's accomplishments in the past three and a half years, I saw a record that was serving our state well.

Here are just a few examples:

- We've put in place Connecticut's first-ever Comprehensive Energy Strategy.
- We've worked closely with the first-in-the nation CT Green Bank to leverage private capital to dramatically increase the deployment of renewable and energy efficiency.
- We worked with many of you on legislation to make big changes in the way we manage solid waste – to boost our recycling rate, and reduce disposal costs for cities, towns, and taxpayers. As someone with a degree in industrial ecology who was dubbed Dr. Trash in one news report, this topic is near and dear to my heart.
- We celebrated the 100th anniversary of Connecticut's magnificent state park system.
- We awarded tens of millions of dollars in Clean Water Fund loans and grants to municipalities to upgrade and improve wastewater treatment plants – investments that create jobs while improving the quality of our rivers, streams, and Long Island Sound.
- We've focused on streamlining the process for the cleanup of contaminated lands, so environmental and public health threats can be eliminated and abandoned sites can be put back into productive use.
- Building on a recommendation of the legislature's Shoreline Task Force, we partnered with the University of Connecticut to create the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation – or CIRCA. Through CIRCA we will develop policies, strategies and practical solutions to help homeowners, businesses and municipalities lessen the negative impacts of a changing climate.

Beyond these specific accomplishments, we've infused our agency with a spirit of innovation.

DEEP has been a leader in adopting LEAN practices to eliminate unnecessary and burdensome requirements – improving service to the public and regulated community and empowering staff to help create real change.

We've invested in our infrastructure, with technology improvements that enable more people to do more business with us online, and we re-energized the agency's focus on Professional Development to offer more training and mentorship opportunities for our staff.

We've also devoted resources to modernizing and upgrading the operations of PURA, helping them take advantage of the benefits of a larger agency when it comes to everything from personnel management and budgeting, to technology.

One quick measure of our success: When PURA became part of DEEP, staff there was still working in antiquated Lotus Notes on old, clunky desktop computers. Everyone at PURA now has new workstations with Microsoft Office at their fingertips.

As you can tell, I am excited, energized, and engaged by the work DEEP is doing and the progress that we are making.

It was just about a year ago that I came before this committee to be confirmed for the first time as Commissioner. At that time I had served three years as chief of staff for the agency and told you that had been the best job in my life. I was wrong about that. Serving as Commissioner this past year has been the best job in my life, by far.

With your support and that of this General Assembly, I look forward to continuing to serve in that capacity.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.