

**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 Michael Hart. I work for the State of Connecticut as a Supervising Engineer for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in the state's Water Pollution Control Program. I am testifying today both as a proud member of CSEA SEIU Local 2001 and a proud state employee for over 20 years.

Over the last 8 to 10 years, I have witnessed substantial depletion of resources within several key environmental regulatory programs at CT DEEP. Many of these programs do not have adequate staffing to meet core regulatory obligations. For example, in my program, we have 3 engineers who are responsible for regulating onsite wastewater treatment and disposal in unsewered areas, which equates to approximately 40% of the state and includes hospital and healthcare facilities, and large-scale commercial and residential developments. For nearly 5 years, I have been managing and working to reduce the largest permit backlog in the Department. Thanks largely to a very bright and dedicated staff coupled with the institution of LEAN program improvements, we have substantially increased our permitting output, but still cannot keep up with the workload. Unfortunately, this has a negative impact on the ability of economic development projects to proceed in unsewered areas across the state.

Even more problematic is that there are no staff to oversee post permit compliance. These onsite systems discharge partially treated wastewaters directly to Class A groundwaters that are a primary source of drinking water for so many of the state's residents. These expansive drinking water systems are at risk because there are no available staff to monitor and ensure effective operation of these wastewater treatment and disposal systems. It's not that we are asleep at the wheel—it's that there is simply no one there. Approximately 6 years ago, the program had 6 staff and could not keep up.

My program is not unique--similar staffing problems occur elsewhere within my division and in other Bureaus. DEEP's Inland Water Resources Enforcement Program formerly had 5 staff, but has NO staff since I left the program in 2010. That means there is virtually no compliance oversight for state wetlands, watercourses and water diversion projects being performed at this time.

The primary reason that we have a healthy environment today is because of the investments made by our parents and grandparents over the past 40 years. We need to invest wisely today to preserve

our natural resources for our children and grandchildren. The ongoing health of our environmental infrastructure is essential to the state's residents and our productive future.

Michael Hart
34 Paper Chase Trl
Avon, CT 06001