
**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 KC Alexander, and I work for the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Recycling Program as an Environmental Analyst III. I am testifying today as a proud member of my Union, CSEA SEIU Local 2001, but also as a concerned resident, and dedicated public servant of 33 years.

In 1986 and 1987 when the Connecticut legislature passed landmark recycling legislation we were national leaders in the field, largely because we were also appropriated the funding for staff to implement, educate, assist and enforce the recycling laws & regulations. As a result, our infrastructure was developed, our recycling rates climbed, businesses were born, school children were learning about recycling, and residents, municipalities, institutions, and businesses were provided technical assistance and in some cases, grants to carry out recycling. We were a model then, not so much today.

Since then, many significant recycling laws have been passed, and that's a good thing - but they have rarely come with appropriate funding to sustain, never mind improve or expand staff and programs. Special funds that helped pay for recycling programs were swept into the general fund, and our staffing levels have been reduced through attrition as a result of budget cuts, retirements, resignations, and even death. Email and the Internet have given the public unprecedented access to DEEP staff, but there are fewer and fewer of us to meet the need to respond. We have been asked for several years to do more with less, but we can't be effective working at the brink of burn-out or without the resources to do our jobs. We have been LEANing, but we can only lean to the point where we begin to fall, and I think we at that point.

My work at DEEP centers around solid waste management and recycling, specifically the recycling of organics. I am the only person at DEEP who concentrates her efforts in this field. I also manage the web content for the recycling and solid waste programs. But I will be retiring from state service in June and have been told that there is no funding to hire a replacement. With no heir apparent, and no other staff who can take on my additional workload, I presume that the strides I have helped make with organics recycling, including the organics laws recently passed in PA 11-213 and PA 13-285, will begin to erode at the exact time when they should be getting an infusion of funds and staff to move forward. You have no idea how sad and worthless this makes me feel. In addition, I have relied heavily on developing our web pages as a way to disperse recycling public information, but

remaining staff won't have the time or training to keep the information current, expanded or improved, so I fear it will become a less effective tool.

Your committee has the ability to help rescue the programs that touch the lives of so many Connecticut residents, businesses and municipalities. Please appropriate DEEP the necessary funds that will make us sustainable, and allow staff to operate at the highest standards possible and at the levels the people we serve deserve.

Thank you for your time and for listening.

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