

**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 Charles Lee and I am a Supervising Environmental Analyst in the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. I am providing testimony as a proud member of CSEA SEIU Local 2001 and as President of Chapter 24, the P4 Bargaining Unit chapter that represents environmental professionals. Tonight, I am providing specific examples of the staffing needs at DEEP in an effort to bring the understaffing of DEEP to your attention.

Recently, after working for more than 25 years as the sole person dedicated to lake water quality in the Water Bureau, I was promoted to supervisor of the non-point source pollution program. As the sole person in the Water Bureau dedicated to lakes, I handled all citizen inquiries, oversaw construction projects, and administer all grants to communities for lake restoration projects; a set of responsibilities that realistically goes well beyond the time available to any one individual.

With my promotion to supervisor, the staff position dedicated to lakes will go unfilled for the foreseeable future. In addition to the aforementioned responsibilities for lake management, the program I now supervise is also responsible for coordination of watershed management, administration of the Federal nonpoint source pollution grant, and providing technical assistance for low impact development. Through attrition this program has been whittled down from eleven people to four professional staff.

Another example of inadequate staffing levels at DEEP is the stream flow standards and regulations mandate by the General Assembly that created a whole new program for DEEP with no new staff resources. Staff at DEEP are concerned that without several positions added to the agency dedicated to the stream flow program, DEEP will not be able to do the work needed to meet the goals of the legislation that mandated the program. The regulations for the stream flow program are complex, with numerous exemptions and special cases that must be evaluated and responded to individually. The program involves classification of the streams in the state, with intensive data requirements and public outreach/notice procedures. The program also has several reporting requirements:

- Initial reporting within 1 year of classification on location, ownership, etc. of the dams regulated under the program. Developing forms, outreach, and processing of the forms when received.
- Submission within 9 years of classification of a description of applicable release rules for each dam and how the owner is going to make those releases – this requires expertise to review the submissions and answer questions as the dam owners develop these plans
- Within 10 years of classification the owners of dam need to begin making and reporting releases. We have to have a system to take in this information, track it, ensure compliance, and evaluated requests for variances for special circumstances

At the moment, three staff people have been pulled away from their primary responsibilities and are spending considerable time doing the classifications and have begun developing the reporting process. There is a lot of work yet to be done and going about the program in this piece-meal fashion is very inefficient.

These are just a few examples of understaffing at DEEP. These examples represent situations that are common throughout the agency. To make this situation worse, many staff at DEEP are eligible to retire now or in the near future.

The staff at DEEP believe in protection of Connecticut's environment through public service. We applaud the General Assembly's work to protect our natural resources, however we are deeply concerned that without adequate staffing we will be unable to fulfill our statutory and Federal mandates. Please consider the staffing levels needed at DEEP to protect our environment in your deliberations on the budget.

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