



Connecticut Environmental Council

Written Testimony
Michael Wallace, President
Connecticut Environmental Council

AN ACT CONCERNING NINETY-DAY PERMIT TURNAROUND TIMES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Environment Committee
Friday, March 16, 2018

Senator Kennedy, Senator Miner, Representative Demicco, Representative Harding and the distinguished members of the Environment Committee, my name is Mike Wallace and I am the president of the Connecticut Environmental Council (CTEC). I appreciate this opportunity to offer our comments in opposing HB 5454 AN ACT CONCERNING NINETY-DAY PERMIT TURNAROUND TIMES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

CTEC is a membership organization representing associations and professionals. Our membership includes the Connecticut Grounds Keepers Association, the Connecticut Tree Protective Association, the Connecticut Pest Control Association, the Connecticut Irrigation Contractors Association, Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents, Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association, and Connecticut Tree Wardens Association.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has seen its financial resources and staffing decimated by our state's challenges with its budget. The fees collected by DEEP have been swept into the general fund, leaving the agency without the capacity to adequately enforce, educate and promote environmental regulations, including permitting and licensing.

Because of decades of budget cuts, DEEP has been unable to automate its processes, leaving permittees with an unacceptable time frame for their permits to be processed. Three months should be more than enough time to get a permit. Currently the wait time for permits and licenses is unacceptable. In a seasonal business, the wait time is too long.

The lack of DEEP funding concerns our members. DEEP is unable to adequately enforce existing regulations. Our licensed, professional pesticide applicators are competing against unlicensed companies and individuals. We want DEEP staff to be able to protect the environment and enforce state statute. This bill is being considered out of necessity to face the real life conditions caused by inadequate funding and staffing of this critical department for the protection of the water, air and environment of the State of Connecticut.

CTEC supports a strong DEEP and would request that the General Assembly adequately fund the department to meet the mandates and goals of the department. While that may not be possible, we must be able to have our licenses and permits processed more quickly. For this reason we *reluctantly* oppose HB 5454 An Act Concerning the Ninety-day Permit Turnaround Times for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.