Public Hearing – March 11, 2019
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Katie S. Dykes

**HB 7296 – An Act Concerning the Recycling of Glass**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding HB 7296 – An Act Concerning the Recycling of Glass. The purpose of this bill is (a) to provide for a plan for world-class glass recycling, and (b) to require all glass containers to include at least 20 percent recycled content.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) supports the intent of this bill but cautions of a potential budgetary impact, as new resources may be required for DEEP to fulfill the requirements to develop the plan.

This bill is consistent with the focus of the State's Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy (CMMS) on improving glass recycling. At the present time, glass presents a financial and logistical burden to curbside recycling programs, because sorting clean, usable glass from mixed recyclables is challenging and expensive, and the commodity value of recovered glass is low relative to other materials. Most glass that is collected in curbside recycling winds up being used for landfill cover or other low-value end uses. In contrast, glass that is collected separately from other materials, as in the bottle redemption system, is most often recycled into new containers and other higher uses. In developing the plan called for in this bill, DEEP could tap into the expertise of several regional organizations with which we work, including the Glass Recycling Coalition, Northeast Recycling Council, and the Northeast Waste Management Official Association. We view the development of a plan to improve the recycling of glass to be worthwhile and timely endeavor, but caution that it may not be possible to accomplish within existing resources.

Regarding recycled content requirements, DEEP is generally supportive of such requirements as a means to establish markets for recycled material and create a domestic “closed loop” supply chain. Such a requirement would likely have the effect of creating jobs in the state’s materials management industry. However, DEEP has not studied the associated costs of such a standard, and cannot offer a recommendation on whether the 20 percent threshold is optimal.

In summary, DEEP looks forward to working with OPM, Office of the Governor and the General Assembly to address the fiscal impact of the bill as part of the greater budget discussions to provide the resources necessary to complete the plan to improve glass recycling.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mandi Careathers, the Department’s legislative liaison, at Mandi.Careathers@ct.gov.