

## Questions for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Nominee

By: Kristen Miller, Senior Legislative Attorney  
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### Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner is responsible for implementing the state's energy and environmental policies; coordinating the management of water, land, and air resources; protecting plants and wildlife, including the preservation of endangered species; providing for pollution abatement, controlling pests, and regulating pesticide use; regulating waste disposal; developing a comprehensive energy plan for the state; transitioning the state to cleaner, more diverse, and sustainable energy sources; and creating opportunities for energy conservation and cost reduction.

DEEP's energy goals are to: (1) reduce utility rates and decrease ratepayer costs, (2) ensure the reliability and safety of the state's energy supply, (3) increase the use of clean energy, and (4) develop the state's energy-related economy. Its environmental goals are to (1) conserve, improve, and protect the state's natural resources and environment and (2) preserve the natural environment while fostering sustainable development ([CGS § 16a-14](#), [CGS § 22a-2d](#), and [CGS § 22a-5](#)).

### Questions for the Nominee

#### *General Questions*

1. How do you think your recent tenure as the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) chairperson will shape how you approach your position as DEEP commissioner? Do you feel

there are any conflicts or differences in the roles of the two positions that will be problematic and, if so, how will adjust to them in your new role?

2. Having served as a deputy commissioner at DEEP during Governor Malloy's administration, how do you expect Governor Lamont's energy and environment policy initiatives will differ from those of the prior administration?

### ***Energy-Related Questions***

1. DEEP's energy-related goals include reducing utility rates, ensuring reliability, increasing clean energy use, and developing the state's energy-related economy. Do you feel that these goals conflict with each other? How will you prioritize them?
2. By law, DEEP retains authorization to conduct solicitations for procuring interstate natural gas transportation capacity, but multistate efforts around a procurement have not gone forward.
  - a. Does DEEP anticipate using this authority to conduct such a procurement?
  - b. To what extent is limited interstate natural gas pipeline capacity affecting the state?
3. In recent years, the legislature has authorized the DEEP commissioner to solicit proposals for power generation and other energy-related products and services (e.g., [PA 13-303](#), [PA 15-107](#), [PA 17-3](#), June Special Session). If these proposals meet certain criteria, the commissioner may direct electric companies to enter into long-term contracts under the proposals. In implementing these procurements, the commissioner is typically required to consider, among other factors, the "ratepayers' best interests."
  - a. How will you define and evaluate what is in ratepayers' best interests? Is it just a matter of paying the lowest rates?
  - b. Are there things that may benefit ratepayers even though they increase rates and, if so, how do you quantify their value?
4. Last year's [PA 18-50](#) directed DEEP and PURA to significantly revise many of the state's renewable energy programs. Can you update us on the status of those revisions and the implementation of the new programs (i.e., tariff-based programs for low-emission, zero-emission, shared clean energy, and residential clean energy) required by the act?

5. DEEP is currently conducting a proceeding to establish an “Electric Vehicle Roadmap” for Connecticut. What types of policy changes is the department considering?
6. Legislation passed in 2017 required DEEP to consider the impact of energy projects on the environment, prime farmland or forest land, and agriculture ([PA 17-218](#)). How will DEEP balance the land-use needs of large-scale energy projects with land conservation concerns?

### ***Environment-Related Questions***

1. Solid waste management issues have recently made front page news in the state given the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority’s (MIRA) turbine shutdown and MIRA’s ensuing need to find alternative solid waste disposal options, which included landfilling waste out-of-state. The following questions relate to solid waste management in Connecticut:
  - a. How would you grade Connecticut’s ability to manage the solid waste it generates and why?
  - b. DEEP and MIRA are involved in a process to redevelop the Connecticut Solid Waste System Project, as provided in [PA 14-94](#). DEEP selected the Sacyr Rooney Development Team to modernize MIRA’s facility in Hartford. A January 8, 2018 *Hartford Courant* [article](#) reports that negotiations with the selected developer stalled due to a disagreement over facility control.
    - i. Please elaborate on the nature of the disagreement.
    - ii. Has MIRA discussed with DEEP what will happen if an agreement is not reached?
  - c. Inner-city residents believe they have historically been overburdened by siting landfills and incinerators in their neighborhoods. How does DEEP address environmental justice issues and ensure that such residents’ voices are heard on environmental concerns?
  - d. During the last several years the legislature has engaged in discussions about changing the state’s “bottle bill.” Some of the proposals include (1) expanding it to include more beverage containers (e.g., sports drinks or nips), (2) increasing the deposit amount, (3) increasing the handling fee, or (4) replacing the deposit with a nonrefundable recycling fee. Each of the proposals has positive and negative effects to certain program participants (e.g., manufacturers, consumers, distributors, redemption centers).

- i. What is your opinion on the bottle bill's effectiveness at reducing solid waste in the state?
  - ii. What changes could be made to the bottle bill to make it more effective at removing beverage containers from the solid waste stream?
- e. Legislators have introduced many bills this session to reduce the waste of specific types of consumer products. Some of these products include helium balloons, plastic bags and straws, polystyrene foam containers, and nip bottles. To maximize solid waste reduction, what products should the legislature prioritize in terms of regulation?
2. The state has several product stewardship programs to manage disposing of certain designated products. For example, the paint stewardship program has been operating since 2013 and manages the disposal of discarded architectural paint. These programs include a fee assessed at the point-of-sale to finance the programs, but the collected fees may not exceed the programs' costs, which may include a financial reserve.
  - a. How much oversight does DEEP have over these programs?
  - b. Do the industry nonprofits tasked with administering the programs reach out to DEEP for guidance or include DEEP in their discussions about the programs' fee structures?
3. Many legislators proposed bills this session to revise the newly-implemented "Passport to the Parks" program by such things as (1) exempting veterans and senior citizens from the \$10 fee assessed on motor vehicle registrations and (2) limiting the fee to only one motor vehicle per household. What is DEEP's position regarding these proposals?
4. The state's black bear population is increasing at a rate of about 10% each year. What does DEEP recommend as being the best ways to (1) manage the growing bear population and (2) decrease interactions between bears and humans?
5. According to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), Connecticut is the only state that does not have certain public lands open to all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use. Each year, ATV operators seek to have DEEP set aside state land for the operation of their vehicles, as provided in state law ([CGS § 23-26c](#)).
  - a. Is DEEP actively engaged with ATV users to find state lands suitable for their use?

b. Under what circumstances would DEEP consider opening up stand lands to ATV use?

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