Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Katie S. Dykes

Senate Bill No. 16 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADULT USE OF CANNABIS

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Senate Bill No. 16 – An Act Concerning the Adult Use of Cannabis. This bill offers a comprehensive framework for the cultivation, manufacture, sale, possession, and use of cannabis that prioritizes public health, public safety, and social justice. DEEP offers the following testimony regarding boating under the influence of cannabis as addressed in this bill.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) offers this testimony specifically to address Sections 16 and 17 of this bill, regarding modifications to the current administrative process applied to the permissions of those who are arrested for boating under the influence of an intoxicating liquor or drug or both. This bill offers, for the first time, a mechanism for determining whether or not a person so arrested is operating a vessel under the influence of cannabis, or more specifically, THC. Until now the law has limited the administrative suspension of boating rights based on an arrest for operating a vessel while intoxicated only to those who exhibit elevated blood alcohol content. Implementation of this bill will now allow DEEP to impose an administrative suspension of boating rights onto those who are operating a vessel while intoxicated with cannabis, and DEEP welcomes this change as a benefit to the boating public and to public safety overall.

DEEP appreciates that this bill is carefully crafted to keep the existing alignment between driving law and boating law. In short, DEEP believes that the measures set forth in Sections 16 and 17 successfully address the problems involved in determining cannabis intoxication as it relates to boat operation, and supports the administrative measures set forth in the bill.

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.