

STATE AGENCY BUDGET PRESENTATIONS
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING

CHAIRPERSON: Senator Catherine Osten,
Representative Toni Walker

SENATORS: Formica, Hartley, Winfield

REPRESENTATIVES: Lavielle, Dathan,
Dauphinais, Dillon,
DiMassa, Horn, Johnson,
Nolan, Ryan, Tercyak,
Wilson

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Good afternoon everybody.
We're going to start the Conservative and
Development Subcommittee Meeting and we're going to
start with the Department of Agriculture. And I
know that most of the people in the building have
people in their offices that have the flu. We'd
like you to keep it all to yourself. So, please do
not share today. Commissioner, you're up.

COMMISSIONER BRYAN HULBURT: We'll do our best to
not share, but there's no promises today.
[Laughing] This should be a sneeze shield in front
of the Committee. Senator Osten, Representative
Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle,
and all of the honorable members of the
Appropriations Committee, thank you for the
invitation to discuss and review the Department of
Agriculture's proposed budget. For the record, I am
Bryan Hurlburt. I'm the Commissioner of the
Department of Agriculture and I am testifying in
support of the proposed budget.

The largest change is our budget is related to the
Hartford Regional Market. If you will recall,

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section 10 of Public Act 18-154 directed the Department to convey the Hartford Regional Market and its operations to the Capitol Region Develop -- Capitol Region Development Authority (CRDA). Over the past year, we have been working closely with CRDA to execute this transfer, to ensure a minimal impact on the tenants, the farmers' market vendors, and the consumers who frequent the market. One of the employees has been maintained -- has maintained his role at the market, through a Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties, and is accounted for by the increased position count of 53 in the General Fund. The other employees were offered, and have accepted, similar positions in other agencies and have transferred over the past four weeks.

Our role at the market is to accept farmers' market applications, fees, and assign stall spaces to the vendors. We will send CRDA this information and they will be responsible for the operation of the farmers market. I am comfortable with this role and our ability to execute it within our current resources.

I would also like to highlight the hemp pilot program that was created under Public Act 19-03. Since launching the program in May, we have issued 114 licenses to grow hemp on 470.71 acres. Most hemp was grown in fields, with an average plot size of 1.44 acres; not everyone who registered actually planted hemp, but they had the opportunity to. To increase awareness and educate the farming community, we undertook a significant outreach effort. The Department conducted five educational

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outreach events across the state in May and June to educate potential growers on the program requirements. These events were held in collaboration with the Department of Consumer Protection, UCONN Extension, and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. On average, more than 70 people attended each of these events.

In November and December, we held four listening sessions across the state to hear feedback from the community about the program, challenges, and successes, and solicit ideas for ways to improve the program. Later this month, we are co-sponsoring Connecticut's first hemp conference and trade show. The show will be at full capacity with 32 registered vendors, and more on the waiting list, and over 200 individually registered attendees. This demonstrates the high interest in the crop and further encourages the Department to keep working with our partner organizations to facilitate the growth of the industry. It has been a great collaborative effort and it is our goal to make it a profitable venture for farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight these two points. At this point I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, and I'd like to also introduce Nate Wilson, the Director of Operations for the agency who many of you will recognize as our liaison from last year. He has stepped up tremendously in this role and is doing a lot more of the internal and day-to-day operations in agency and I'm very thankful and lucky to have him. So with that, to members of the Committee.

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REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you, thank you, sir and thank you for your testimony. And so, how's it feel? It's better to be on that side, huh, than it is over here? [Laughing].

BRYAN HULBURT: We'll determine that after.
[Laughing]

REP. WALKER (93RD): Oh, okay, all right. Not yet. So I'm going to go right to the market -- regional market operation fund. What was that used for?

BRYAN HULBURT: So that was for the seven positions down at the regional market, so there was the Executive Director, which was partially funded from there, the rest of the Executive Director was one-third of the Bureau Chief. There was the maintainer, there was another maintenance person and then there is a secretary and then building grounds patrol officers. So those were the actual personnel stationed there, but was our count for all of the Capitol improvements, all the maintenance, the operations done at regional market, so all of that has been either cleared out or swept over to CRDA in this transfer.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Did they -- did this fund provide you with services?

BRYAN HULBURT: Provide us with additional services, I'm sorry?

REP. WALKER (93RD): Uh-huh.

BRYAN HULBURT: It was only our personnel, right? There was no --

NATE WILSON: Personnel and other expenses --

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REP. WALKER (93RD): You have to introduce yourself first.

NATE WILSON: Hi, I'm Nate Wilson, Director of Operations.

REP. WALKER (93RD): There's a microphone right in front of you. Turn that one on. Thank you.

NATE WILSON: Nathan Wilson, Director of Operations, Connecticut Department of Agriculture. There was also accounting for other expenses which would be for our utility bills and plows down there as well, because we had to plow the market for the vendors. You know supplies as Commissioner mentioned. We do have maintainers there so we do need supplies for fixing plows, anything really just to make sure that the market is operating.

BRYAN HULBURT: A water main broke one day.

REP. WALKER (93RD): So -- so my next question is, public act 18-154. Did that establish the -- the regional market operation fund? Did that act -- is this statutorily -- is this in statute, this fund?

BRYAN HULBURT: That's a question that --

REP. WALKER (93RD): The reason that I ask that is because there's an MOU here, so the purpose of the MOU was what? To be able to transfer from this fund into CRDA, so it makes me think that maybe that there is a statute in legislation that established it and that's what I'm trying to find out; so you don't know that?

BRYAN HULBURT: I don't know that off the top of my head. That's a -- that's a very good point. We can

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get an answer to that. You know the MOU does not have to be permanent and I'm assuming that there will be a fix, a more permanent statutory fix at some point, but this allows it to -- you know to make sure the operations continue through this process.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Can I just OFA if they could either tell me yes or no or say that they will get back to us with the information? [Laughing] You were supposed to say, yes, that's right Representative. [Laughing] Okay. All right. Because I -- the reason why I ask is because we're starting to see MOUs pop up in the budget to change, alter or eliminate things that were already in statute and OPM has done at least one other one that I know and as I go through the budget I'm starting to see maybe possibly more, and an MOU is not what is needed to change something that's in law. So I just -- I need to identify that and find out, so thank you.

BRYAN HULBURT: We can get you that.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Okay. And then the only other question that I had was, in your budget were there items -- were there items like staffing or anything that you feel that would be helpful to you as an agency that maybe we should be looking at to add into your budget -- into your agency.

BRYAN HULBURT: I appreciate the question. You know the Governor's budget maintains our current staffing level with the transition of that one person. Last year we received the two additional positions for the hemp program. One of those positions is hired

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and on board and has been for a couple months now. The other one will be starting later this month.

REP. WALKER (93RD): So we've got two people now to do hemp?

BRYAN HULBURT: Yes, yep, and we were doing it within current resources and now we'll be able to have two dedicated people there. So my position is the budget gives us the resources that we need in order to fulfill our mission and I think we, we can be very happy with what we have here.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Good answer. Are there any questions? Representative Horn.

REP. HORN (64TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Commissioner.

BRYAN HULBURT: Good to see you.

REP. HORN (64TH): I wanted to ask you a little bit more about the hemp program and whether you could just comment on whether you were the -- the results that you got first of all in terms of people who signed up; was that in line with your expectations or?

BRYAN HULBURT: No, it widely exceeded our expectations. I honestly thought we'd have a couple dozen growers with a couple dozen acres and so the fact that we had that many farmers interested in pursuing this was really quite amazing. When we went to the first educational meeting down in North Haven and it was standing room only and people were literally -- we were down in North Haven, UCONN Extension Center, people were literally standing in the lobby trying to listen. That to me demonstrated

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that there was a you know, a significantly more amount of interest.

I think next year we'll see -- you know this year was an opportunity for people to kind of play and see, does this work? Will this fit for my farm? I think next year we'll see fewer growers but larger average as people decide to make the investment or determine that that's not the right fit for their farm.

REP. HORN (64TH): And so at this point do you have a sense from those who did take the leap and do it, how it worked out for them economically? Um --

BRYAN HULBURT: Yes, it's been slow getting the processing set up in the state. It has taken a little bit longer than people thought, but that requires a lot more equipment and locations and infrastructure. So people are now starting to get paid for their hemp that's being processed. You know it's hard to stay -- the vast majority of the people that I talked to said they'll do it again. We have -- I can't remember the number off the top of my head, but in -- we have a report to the General Assembly that was turned in last week regarding the hemp program -- we'll make sure you get a copy, Representative; but individuals thought it was still worth up to \$30,000 an acre and so you know, that's a -- that's a tremendous revenue generator for some small farms, and so I think they will pursue it.

REP. HORN (64TH): Great, thank you. Thank you, Representative.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Representative Lavielle.

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REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thank you. Good afternoon. Thanks for being here.

BRYAN HULBURT: Good afternoon.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): What's the actual operational consequence of the transfer to the CRDA? Just what -- what actually will change?

BRYAN HULBURT: From our perspective we won't have day-to-day oversight of the region market. CRDA will have oversight. We have a maintainer on staff who remains a state employee, remains a Department of Agriculture employee who is MOU'd to CRDA and will report to them. And so we -- we have essentially given up the seven positions that were in the budget. The responsibilities for all of the maintenance, Capital improvements, tenant relationships, the Connecticut -- excuse me, the Connecticut Marketing Authority and the operation of the farmer's markets on the weekends. So you know it's a pretty significant transfer from our agency at CRDA.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): But the -- it's simply for financial purposes; it's just a question of where the oversight is, or um, is there actually less spending as a consequence?

BRYAN HULBURT: The goal is, and CRDA is attempting to create a profitable venture at Hartford Regional Market is that tenants rights will generate enough revenue and income to make the investments that are necessary. So I don't know that this was a financial decision when it was made in 2018. We've just been executing it -- the statute. But the goal that I know CRDA has is to ensure that it's a viable

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and feasible market that generates enough revenue to making investments that need to happen.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Okay. Thank you.

BRYAN HULBURT: Thank you.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Representative Dillon.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Good afternoon, Commissioner.

BRYAN HULBURT: Good afternoon.

REP. DILLON (92ND): I wonder if you could provide more information about the food vouchers, the WIC and the Senior in terms of where they're used. I know that there's been conversation over the years with different groups about -- about the adequacy of a senior food voucher as it stands; and just bring it to us for the work group.

BRYAN HULBURT: Yeah, so um, thank you for that question Representative. We -- we have both Connecticut is unique in that we have the Federal WIC and Seniors Farmers Market nutrition programs and then we have an additional state investment in both programs. So because the federal dollars lapse, we try to make sure we spend them first so we actually do two buckets for WIC and Seniors Farmers Market nutrition programs, spin those down and then we release our -- the state funded programs. We have shifted the way that we have done the distribution. In the past one of our employees was working with 300 community-based organizations across the state trying to manage that distribution. We've really focused on fewer, larger community-based organizations that then distribute amongst their network within the community, so I believe

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there's 175 sites that the vouchers are able to be redeemed at.

The one thing we are going to be doing this year because our WIC -- state WIC program redemption is lower, is try to work more closely with the WIC sites themselves and as people come in, that the WIC employees themselves do a better job or at least are aware the vouchers and encourage folks to take advantage of them and identify where somebody could shop with the vouchers and when they could shop there. So we -- that's going to be the focus for this coming session season.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thank you. If you could bring that information to the work group. Then just an editorial comment, a previous administration suspended the senior vouchers while running the government on an executive order, which has resulted in a very high level of vigilance I would say from a number of people about whether -- you know about the status of the program. And I know that -- I can't remember all the details. I think Waterbury had a very particular problem, but I know that the seniors in our area were quite anxious and it didn't involve the vendor, it involved the seniors themselves so that -- any helpful detail you can provide.

BRYAN HURLBURT: Okay. Thank you. And that did create a lot of confusion that we're still trying to work with individuals from that -- that time period you reference.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Representative Dathan.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Thank you very much, Madam Chair and thank you very much, Commissioner and it's

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nice to meet your colleague as well. I just had a quick question on the Capitol Region Development Agency Authority. I understand that they're focusing more on capitol projects. I'm assuming the capitol projects will be run through bonding, and not through the general fund; is that correct?

BRYAN HURLBURT: Uh-huh.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): And what kind of level of -- I know it's not quite our lane, but dollar amount are those, and what sort of projects would they be for the state?

BRYAN HURLBURT: Yeah, it would be through bonding. Thank you for that. CRDA it's my understanding, undertaking kind of a comprehensive review of the regional market. Regional market is an 80-year-old facility that has been scotch-taped and duct-taped and wired together across its lifetime so it needs some significant work. I don't know that they have finalized the -- the total cost of what it would take. Mike Freimuth, the Executive Director of CRDA and I have had conversations about could they demo one building to build, you know a newer refrigerated you know, building space and then kind of work though it that way. I'm not sure that they have any final conclusions on that. You know he is committed to keeping the regional market an agricultural market. He's included me in a lot of these conversations so I think we'll be able to work together as that plan develops, but I'm not sure that there's any formal plan yet to speak of.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): So just to followup, how many vendors or farmers participated and do you see the

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kind of -- I hate to say deal flow, but the sort of flow of farmers remaining constant, decreasing, increasing, what is your sort of view on that, that whole market?

BRYAN HURLBURT: The farmers market on the -- on the weekends is -- is tremendously popular. If you would like to join me at 5:00 a.m. on Mother's Day weekend, Saturday or Sunday, I'll let you choose. [Laughing] I was down there last year. There were thousands of people. I mean you know, there's -- you know like I said I was there at about 4:30 in the morning and I was parking in the third row back. So there's -- there's a tremendous amount of interest there.

I can get you the number of farmers. Usually there's a couple dozen, but it really is too segments. You know, the flower season, you know around Easter and Mother's Day. And then towards the end of the season you know, August, September, October when all the produce is in. But we can get you a count of the farmers that attend for those. In the interim periods there, sometimes it's one farmer, sometimes it's two but for those busy periods it's pretty significant.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): So presumably with the hemp market we now would have CBD products that are coming to those markets as well?

BRYAN HURLBURT: I don't think CBD products would qualify to be sold at that under the current provisions, but you know, it could be revised to allow that.

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REP. DATHAN (142ND): Got it, thank you so much for your presentation.

BRYAN HURLBURT: Thank you.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you. Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Thank you, Madam Chair and Commissioner, has it been a year?

BRYAN HURLBURT: Not quite.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Not quite, okay.

BRYAN HURLBURT: So you still have to treat me nicely, Senator. [Laughing]

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): So Commissioner, I'm -- when we get into the smaller groups I want to learn a little bit more about the certification of Connecticut Grown. I want to understand you know how we vet that so that we know they are in fact Connecticut grown and how that works once it gets to the market; is that a favorite, is that you know something that we've promoted and helped to promote. And if not, just want to talk about that.

BRYAN HURLBURT: And if I may just -- we do have a proposal to clarify what Connecticut grown is. That will be before the General Assembly. I believe the Environment Committee raised the concept on Friday. We are also -- so we want to clarify that so that everybody does have an understanding of what it is both producers and consumers. But the other piece that we're undertaking is we're putting out an RFP for a marketing campaign to really -- we'll understand what is the Connecticut Grown campaign mean? What do people think it means? What's the

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value in it? How can we do a better job at the agency to promote it?

You know our agency's different than a lot of agencies where we're responsible for regulating the industry but also promoting the industry and so taking that responsibility very seriously, we're looking at ways to really ramp up that marketing program. The last time it was done was in 2015. It did raise awareness and it did receive good reviews and so you know we want to take another stab at it and see what -- what else can we do? Through my time at the Farm Bureau, then I'm in transition team and now in this role; farmers are always asking if the state could help with that initial marketing pitch, make people be aware of what is grown in Connecticut, what to look for, then they can do their own individual business marketing but we need to elevate that entire conversation and so we're looking to find ways to do that over the coming years.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): I think that's really important, so does any part of that come out of the agricultural sustainability line item -- no, that's just -- that's all dairy. But dairy is a part of Connecticut Grown.

BRYAN HURLBURT: Yes.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Yeah.

BRYAN HURLBURT: Yes, not the sustainability fund is for the -- the dairy offset program. But the CT Grown account is in the CIA. It's one of the line items in the CIA.

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SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Okay, yeah, so can you get us a breakdown of that so we can --

BRYAN HURLBURT: Yep.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): -- look at it in a historical view?

BRYAN HURLBURT: Yep, yep.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Just for clarification, Senator, are you looking for the breakdown of the CIA fund with all of its line items in it?

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): No, right now I mean --

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Just the [crosstalk].

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Yeah.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): 'Cause this Ag, Housing, Historic Preservation; are you looking for all of that? We could have OFA get that for us.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Yeah, at this juncture I just really want to talk about the Connecticut Grown.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Okay. I just wanted to make sure that we were getting --

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): We've got another opportunity to do that too.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): [Laughing] Yes, we do. Are there any other questions for the Commissioner? Seeing none, thank you very much.

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BRYAN HURLBURT: Thank you all very much.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): I do believe everybody knows the Commissioner's not feeling well so he can leave without getting the rest of us sick. [Laughing]

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Oh, go home, Commissioner.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. If you want to come up. Are you waiting for anybody, Commissioner? Okay great. Thank you very much for coming, Commissioner. You want to go ahead and start and Brandon, if you could call the Department of Labor to make sure that they're on their way too.

SEILA MOSQUERA-BRUNO: Good afternoon, Senator Osten and Representative Walker, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Seila Mosquera-Bruno, Commissioner of the Department of Housing. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before you regarding Governor Lamont's recommended budget adjustment for fiscal year 2021. The Department of Housing is committed to his mission, which is to ensure everyone has access to quality housing opportunities and options throughout the state of Connecticut. The department's many programs are aimed at addressing the needs of very low, low, moderate income individuals and families.

As you may be aware the department provides funding for programs to preserve our existing affordable housing, as well as capitol funding for new development opportunities. Governor Lamont's proposed budget recommendations for DOH demonstrate his commitment and support of the agency's mission. Governor Lamont's proposed budget recommendation

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continue to provide funding to support rental assistance for the state strategy to rebalance long-term care and to implement a fair housing program for high-cost, high-need individuals. Our ability to provide necessary housing opportunities to our most vulnerable citizens are also achieving savings in Medicaid. This is of extreme importance and is consistent with our Housing First motto.

Although it appears that the housing and homeless services line has a minor reduction, in reality this is an adjustment of the baseline consistent with actual expenditure for the current year. This baseline adjustment would have no impact on the department's programs and activities. The budget also includes funding to support the impact of the minimum wage increase for providers. The Department of Housing supports the Governor's budget recommendation for fiscal year 2021 submitted to you by Governor Lamont. Thank you for your time, and along with members of the department staff, I stand ready to answer any questions you may have regarding the proposed budget recommendations before you today.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much, Commissioner and thank you for coming. I just have one question. Well actually I might have a lot of questions but I have one specific question on a million dollar cut to housing and homeless services, because I still hear from my constituents that there is not a lot of housing aid available, and so I'm wondering why would we cut a million dollars out of the housing and homeless services and not move that money to RAP or another housing form?

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SEILA MOSQUERA-BRUNO: I'm going to ask Steve to explain.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Uh-huh, yep.

STEVE DILELLA: Good afternoon members of the Committee. My name is Steve DiLella from the Department of Housing and at the department I am the Director of the Individual and Family Support Program Unit which oversees the housing and homeless services line item in our budget. So to answer your question, Senator Osten, the funding that is being reduced there is due to the rental assistance program as it relays to the new funding that was given to us last year for the Money Follows the Person, as well as the family unification program. As you know, when somebody's offered a housing voucher it often takes some time to get that unit leased up. So when somebody's offered the unit, it takes them a while to go out and find an apartment, get it inspected. So that is where you would see some of the lapse.

So for the Department of Children and Families, they will be able to lease up all that new funding by next year. However, we also have another program called the Chess Program, which is a Medicaid match where Medicaid will provide services for high-cost Medicaid users that are also homeless. So we're going through the process right now of getting CMS approval in order to implement that. So as a result there will be a delayed roll out for that program, which can explain some of the reductions there.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So I understand what you're saying, but why would we take it out of the fiscal

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year '21 funds and not just increase the funding seeing as by the million dollar lapse that's in current year. Because if it is just taking a year longer or six months longer to provide someone with a contract it doesn't make sense to me to drop the dollars down and not provide additional housing in fiscal year '21.

STEVE DILELLA: Sure, so we are a very thankful to the budget as is appropriated to us, so those lines were very specific to the programs in which we were supposed to fund, specifically as it relates to that chess program and as it relates to Money Follows the Person. So if we do not get the Medicaid approval in a quick fashion, we will not be able to house those folks at that time. So, if there is an opportunity to expand it to other populations, that is an opportunity the department would gladly welcome that conversation.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So again, I'm going to go back to the -- my basic question. If you think it's going to take longer to use the funds in a specific line item yet there are many line items in housing that provide housing for homeless or couch surfing folks; why not move that into another line item? This is your time to put it into another line item that provides equal services. So I understand being faithful to the current budget in the current fiscal year. But if we're cutting from next fiscal year, I don't see why we could -- why we would not have moved that to a CAN, to another housing situation rather than say well, we're not going to be able to spend it and so I -- I'd rather see an -- and in our subcommittee meetings I'm going to push the issue

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where there are other line items where this more appropriately belongs, and that I could say, not cutting it and not spending it is not achieving what I think we need, and particular with the amount of homeless relative to supportive services, relative to those that turn 18, and are not housed, relative to someone who might, whose family member might have had a Section 8 voucher and as that person dies then the people living with that person have no place to go. I mean there are a number of situations that are going on out there where we could provide more housing for people.

And if we're going to truly meet our goal of eradicating homelessness across the state as we have essentially done with Veterans, there's always somebody that pops up, but essentially we've done that; I'd like to see the same thing done for those that might be chronically mentally ill and need supportive housing, those that are newly on the street from being formally incarcerated. I think there's just a number of ways that we could do that so when you come back to the subcommittee meetings, I'm going to ask those questions and try to push that along. So, any other questions?

Representative Dathan followed by Senator Hartley.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I just wanted to follow on with your questions on the housing and homeless services. Do we keep track of this sort of statistics, the sort of annual number of vouchers that are given out? Do we have -- can we get a five-year analysis of the number of vouchers handed out? Number of people that are -- and also a number of people that are --

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receive the service, what happens. Love to see that, 'cause it seems like from what I understood in the meeting yesterday that this account tends to lapse a lot because of the timing difference that you spoke about. So I am concerned that we are losing people.

Does the Department of Housing work with some of the youth and outreach centers? 'Cause I understood in January they just did a PIT point in time count, and I'd love to hear about how we are ensuring that those youth are getting served because I understand a lot of these kids come out of foster care, they age out of the system, but yet they might not be able to qualify for people and so then they're on the streets. And I worry that there's other -- hate to so comorbidities or whatever, other circumstances that these kids could face on the street that they wouldn't come to. And so if we reach them early with their housing needs, we can maybe curb some of the other issues that they might come across later in life. So I'd love to hear how you work with the PIT counts and what exactly happened with them.

STEVE DILELLA: Sure. So for your first question, yes, we do keep track of how all of our funding is up for the rental assistance program. It is good to note that within that RAP program there are many different subpopulations that we do work with. I think it's our goal that the department has to work with as many state agency partners as possible, so when you look at that breakdown you will see that we do have rental assistance for the Department of Children and Families, for the Department of Social

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Services, for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

So there are a wide variety of programs that we do fund. Some of them have more robust data than others. For example when you're talking about the homeless population the federal government requires us to keep information on that; so we'll be able to give you very detailed information about the outcomes. Some of the other programs don't have that same criteria so we can give you certainly numbers on that but the outcomes may be a little bit more difficult to track down. But we're happy to provide you with a list of all that. We actually do provide a report annually that we'll be happy to share with you.

In terms of the second question as it relates to the point and time count for homeless youth; you are correct. There was a point in time count done this year in January and that has been going on for the past few years. Youth has been a focus of the department in the last three or four years, I would say. Previous to that we really did not have a very qualified system of addressing homelessness among our youth population, and as a result we really try to put our effort into creating that system.

We were lucky enough to apply to the federal government for a program called, Youth Demonstration -- Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP). When that came out in 2016 here in Connecticut we were able to receive the largest grant awarded nationally for that. So with that funding we have

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been able to try to bill out an entire youth system. Once again, it is extremely difficult because we know always there are more folks out there than we are able to serve with our funding. So throughout our development process we engaged a wide variety of stakeholders including youth themselves to determine how they best thought that this resource could be used. So we had a year and a half planning session for that and now we begin to implement some of those recommendations in the past six months.

So we've been able to house some youth via RAP Rehousing. We've also been able to create some shelter space for youth throughout the state, even that isn't always the number one priority because we do realize that the answer homelessness is getting people back in a house and not necessarily a shelter so we put a lot of our efforts into RAP Rehousing folks. And we are learning a lot of lessons because we haven't had that system set up for youth so I think we're going to have to learn from what we've done and tweak that to be able to encourage the best possible results we can for our youth population.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Great, do you have any data to support some of the things that you just spoke about?

STEVE DILELLA: For the youth it is really in its infancy. We can -- you know most of the folks that we provided housing for are still within their first six months so we really aren't going to have solid outcomes yet for another year or two to really see what happens to folks after they are in our housing program, after they came to support services to determine where they end up. We can certainly share

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with you the process for how we decided to go with the certain types of programs that we did. So I think that is something we can; but in terms of actual outcomes of the youth served, it's really in its infancy and we don't quite have that data yet, but we will within another six months to a year.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Okay. I look forward to that, but I'm very concerned about what funding threatens -- threats are at our federal level and how this will effect our state budgets 'cause I do see a huge trickle down affect and people losing out, so.

STEVE DILELLA: On the bright side of that, generally the funding pool from which this federal funding comes from has not been hit by any budget cuts to date. And in addition, when I looked at the President's proposed budget, he maintained that line within HUD as a stable rate. So that is on the good side. It doesn't mean that it won't change tomorrow, but as of today we are anticipating having the same level of funding in our program.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): It's just the other programs that are associated. People don't just have a housing unit --

STEVE DILELLA: Agreed, agreed. That is correct.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): [Crosstalk]. I will let other people ask questions. Thank you very much for your presentation.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And nice to see you, Commissioner and staff. I would like to when we get into the work groups

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probably get a bit more detailed about the 2-1-1 process and the staffing of that and the history of that, and what are the number of calls and how are they disposed of? And I'll just tell you from the start, I've had some personal experience in my district where folks are on hold for so long that they give up. In one instance in the middle of a snow storm a person on the street ran out of minutes being on hold and went back to the parking booth with the blue tarp that they were with; just gave up.

So anyway, I want to have a chance to understand this. How are we staffing it? If we're talking about moving money from line to line; it seems to me, I'm told that there are eight people 24/7, that's for the state?

STEVE DILELLA: Yep.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Yeah, so --

STEVE DILELLA: I can give you some brief quick numbers and we can definitely provide you more in-depth in the small group meetings.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Yeah.

STEVE DILELLA: So overall when we went to coordinate access around 2015 we funded the 2-1-1 system at a rate of \$700,000 to start. That was mostly paid for out of the Community Investment Act funding.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Uh-huh.

STEVE DILELLA: We had been lucky enough to locate some other federal resources to help pay for part of

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that \$700,000 and you are correct. It funds about seven fulltime workers that are specifically related to the housing unit as well some supervisory capability.

In terms of the number of calls that you're talking about to 2-1-1, it's approximately 75,000 over the last few years that specifically had a housing crisis to them, so that's what you're looking. Seven people or so taking on 75,000 calls.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): And not to interrupt you -- they're taking only housing calls or they're taking the whole [crosstalk].

STEVE DILELLA: That unit, the goal is to take only housing calls. If at any given point in time they do not have a housing call, will they assist other calls that come to 2-1-1, yes, but when you talk to 2-1-1 they will say for the most part those folks are just taking housing crisis calls. And in addition, at the high peak times of housing crisis calls some of their other staff who focus on other issues such as suicide prevention, although that would always take precedence, or whether it's information about other benefits; whether it's unemployment, whether it's food, security, along those lines. They often times are hopping on and helping out in terms of the housing crisis calls.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): What's the average wait time?

STEVE DILELLA: It depends. It really depends on the time of the day but when you talk 2-1-1 their statistics or average wait time is around four to five minutes. But obviously --

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SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): [Crosstalk]

STEVE DILELLA: Well, I think part of that is we were talking about averages that really looks at over the course of 24 hours. So there are going to points in time where it is not very crowded. I think what we do need to do is a deeper dive and looking at those specific timeframes where most people are more likely to call to determine what those average wait times are.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): What are the peak times?

STEVE DILELLA: We would say your normal 7:00 in the morning 'till 5:00 in the afternoon.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Is peak?

STEVE DILELLA: Yes.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Commissioner?

SEILA MOSQUERA-BRUNO: Can I add; when I first came to the department I needed to learn more about the 2-1-1 because I also had a lot of people telling me that somebody calls and they were having -- when somebody would call they would not be taken care of if they were not homeless at the time that they were making that phone call, so I made a point to visit several facilities and to visit the 2-1-1 and to see, also asking for statistics and what was alarming to me was that phone calls for housing were about 20,000 where the amount of the people that I have for taking these calls are not enough.

And then for emergency housing were another 20,000 and for electricity shutoff were another 10,000 and we were only able to serve I think less than 10,000

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if I remember the numbers. So that has been very frustrating because the amount of people that are calling in the cities of Hartford and New Haven and Waterbury are actually the cities where we have more people calling in.

So a couple of things that we -- we are doing. One is to move that needle from you can only get help if you are homeless; we were able to get \$1 million dollars out to help those kind of prevent people from being homeless. If there is an emergency for rent or two months rent because somebody was sick or the car broke, so we are making that fund very flexible and it's going to be going to the organizations that work with the 2-1-1 supporting that system that would be able to access these funds and being able to respond to families before they get to homelessness.

And then we are looking how we can also not just use the 2-1-1 for people to call but also the need for staff in those CAN systems where people can go to those offices or to other places that they can come in and look for services. So we are working on that, trying to address some of those issues because it is really pretty devastating to see how many families are looking for help.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Yes, and if I might follow up with one of you. So you're saying you average a four to five minute wait time on the call and that's a 24-hour period. Can you give me average wait times between your peaks, which is 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; I'd like to know what those averages are.

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STEVE DILELLA: Yeah, and we'll certainly work with United Way 2-1-1 to get that information for you.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Thank you, thank you Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Representative Horn.

REP. HORN (64TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. I -- and thank you both for being here. I just also want to take this particular opportunity to thank the Commissioner for being so available to people in my district, which is quite remote. People have been grateful for your time and attention, so I want to thank you for that in particular.

My question is about the point in time count, which we just mentioned a minute ago, which I participated in this year. And one of the things that I heard from the advocates was that it's crazy to measuring homelessness in January because you know, if anybody's going to find a couch to sleep on you know for a few days, it's going to be -- it's going to be in extreme weather conditions and that that will systematically under count the real need out there and I wondered whether you had similar experiences or whether there's any other efforts to -- to have other counts.

STEVE DILELLA: Sure, so there's a couple of things that we do. First off the point in time count is something that is required of us since we do receive federal dollars from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and they actually tell us when we have to do the point in time count. They say you have to do it within the last 10 days of the month

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of January. So, we do agree that often times because it is a cold time of year, that can effect the total numbers of folks that are unsheltered at least so we are required to do it at that time.

We have other measures in place where we are able to collect our HMIS, the Homeless Management Information System, where we can kind of tell how often our programs and our shelters are being utilized throughout the year, so that's one way to do it. We have not taken on doing an unsheltered count in the summertime. That is something that could be discussed, but we have yet to take that on.

REP. HORN (64TH): Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Senator Hartley has one more question. [Laughing] You need -- you need more time than Senator Hartley, so. [Laughing]

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): That means Cathy will cut me off; she won't cut you off. [Laughing] One more if I might. So, uh, you probably undoubtedly have heard about this program from New York City the SOTA Program, and you don't have to get into it right now but I'm just wondering if you have any way to get your arms around the effects that it's having here. I think it's probably pretty recent. The concern is after the subsidy runs out in one year, then what happens. So, if we could maybe have a little bit more conversation about that and from your prism, if and what we might be able to do in terms of sending a message or you know, finding these landlords and you know, just drilling down on this.

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STEVE DILELLA: I agree. I am equally concerned about that program. For those of you who do not know, there's a program that's run out of New York City that will provide one year of rental assistance to anybody who's into their shelter system if they leave the jurisdiction of the city. So there are folks that are traveling across state borders. This is a big problem in New Jersey as well as I know there's some in Waterbury too. We don't know the full extent yet because I do believe that for the most part they're in the first year, so I think it's something that would make sense for us to try to keep an eye on. I don't know what our ability would be to contact the landlords, but I think it is something we should certainly pay attention to.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Appreciate it, thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Representative Walker, would you like to ask any questions?
[Laughing]

REP. WALKER (93RD): Getting ready to scream. Good afternoon and welcome, and welcome Commissioner, welcome. Just before we get off of this topic I thought that I'd heard that HUD would allow people to travel with their vouchers, their RAP vouchers.

STEVE DILELLA: It depends on the type of program that you have. So we were talking about a Section 8 certificate. Those are 100 percent portable to any United -- any state in the United States or any territory so that is certainly true. When you're talking about RAP that is state of Connecticut funded --

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REP. WALKER (93RD): Right.

STEVE DILELLA: -- so that is obviously within the confines of our borders. Then there are some other problems specifically as relates to the homeless programs called the continuum of care, otherwise formally known as shelter plus care that provides rental assistance to folks who are homeless. Those are given out to HUD via continued care competitive process and HUD would like those to stay within the continuum of care. So here in Connecticut we've managed to go down to two continuums of care but we would easily flip-flop if somebody wanted to move within the state of Connecticut.

Outside of the state of Connecticut we haven't had any too many requests for that type of movement for that program. If it did occur, we'd obviously reach out to our local HUD field office to see what the options are for them.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Okay. On the homeless line, have you ever heard of an annual homeless assessment report done by HUD?

STEVE DILELLA: Yes.

REP. WALKER (93RD): The most recent one if I remember correctly, has the fact that 40 percent of the homeless population are minority families; did you see that?

STEVE DILELLA: We certainly do a report --

REP. WALKER (93RD): It was individuals, 52 percent are now homeless minority families.

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STEVE DILELLA: Yeah, so the AHAR is a report that is done every year and yes, the -- there is information that comes out and I think the homeless service system, we certainly are diving into the topic of race equity because we do know that folks of color are far more represented in our homeless population than the general population as well. So we do realize that, so I think we're trying to take steps to make our system more equitable as it relates to race.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Well the fact that we don't feel that the number is warranted, it has gone up 12 percent from the previous year, just for minorities. So, to say that there's no new for these dollars, I think it's a mischaracterization of the situation here in Connecticut. So, um, I would like to see how you came up with this idea of a reduction, what it would do to the lines that you have now currently if we don't provide this funding.

And I'd like to know about the number of calls that you have from 2-1-1 so that we know how many people are really experiencing it online. I know the count -- if I remember, 'cause I've been around a little bit, not as long as Pat or Senator Hartley, but I remember when McKinney-Vento used to do their homeless count in the summertime. That was when -- 'cause I had to do it at my school and I remember that was part of it, so there should be some statistics that we have for summer. I think our numbers would go up more in the summertime than the winter obviously because people would rather go to shelters in the wintertime, but in the summertime I'm sure that they would probably rather couch surf

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or live under trees and things and that's not acceptable.

But I'm just saying from the ones that I had talked to, that's what they told me. They said in the wintertime they go to a shelter and in the summertime they either stay on a friend's couch or they -- some of them even have their own tents that they pack in their backpacks when they come to school, sadly. I know that. So I really would like to see the details on this, so thank you very much.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Are there any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much. You know we'll have more questions for you during subcommittee.

STEVE DILELLA: Thank you for your time.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Is the Department of Labor here? Right there. Thank you very much. You can go ahead and start.

CHRIS LAVIGNE: Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Representative Lavielle, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Chris Lavigne. I'm the Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Labor and I'm here on behalf of Commissioner Kurt Westby and the leadership team, three of which are unable to make it today due to being under the weather. Excuse me? [Background talking]. Yeah. It's my pleasure to be with you today to support and discuss the Governor's proposed adjustments to the 2021 budget.

I'll begin by addressing the Governor's recommended adjustments to support workforce development. The budget restores the office of workplace

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competitiveness as an independent office housed within the office of policy and management for administrative purposes. This will strategically align workforce development efforts throughout the state. To support this initiative \$313,000 dollars in one fulltime position is reallocated from the Department of Labor to OWC in order to support the newly reconstituted state workforce board which is now called the Governor's Workforce Council. These adjustments will be made so OWC can independently and effectively staff and support the GWC.

In order to further streamline government operations we support the Governor's initiative to centralize human resources and labor relation staff under the Department of Administrative Services in the office of Policy and Management. This realignment of services from the Department of Labor will promote a uniform and administration of state process systems and functions.

The budget also proposes to reallocate funding for the Spanish-American Merchant's Association from the Department of Economic and Community Development to the Department of Labor. The Department of Labor has a long history of servicing this program. In 2020 the funding for this programs was transferred to the Department -- DECD, however the Department of Labor continued to administer the program by entering into an MOU with DECD. In the interest of administrative streamlining we welcome the opportunity to continue to provide these services.

The budget also includes a \$500,000 decrease in youth employment program. We appreciate the value provided by youth services as well as the need for

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the Governor -- Governor's budget to balance the budget. It would be noted that the remaining funding represents a 12.5 percent increase over funding levels provided in 2019 and this program remains a high priority for the department of labor.

Lastly, the Governor -- the Governor's midterm budget adjustments provide additional funding of \$100,000 for the New Haven Jobs Funnel. This joint public/private partnership creates career opportunities in construction and other technical trades and it has produced quality candidates for some of New Haven's largest employers such as Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital. The New Haven Jobs Funnel program has proven -- has a proven track record and is a results-based and successful -- results-based successful history in placements in Connecticut.

Is it the belief -- it is the belief of Commissioner Westby and the DOL leadership that the recommended adjustments streamline and enhance our agency's ability to provide services to the state employees, job seekers and business communities? We continue to offer training programs, apprenticeships, incumbent worker training and unemployment assistance. In addition, DOL's wage workplace standards division, OSHA and legal divisions all assist employers by providing educational programs to keep them informed and up to date with Connecticut laws and regulations and this ensures that employers and employees are treated fairly in our state.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to present to you today. I'll be happy to answer any questions

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and I apologize if I do not have the expertise, as we are missing much -- several DOL staff that would have the subject matter expertise.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much. I have -- I have a number of questions and then some of my colleague do and if you cannot answer them, just let us know that and when you come for the subcommittee meeting we will be asking specific questions.

So under the Connecticut Youth Employment I see that you want to achieve savings out of the \$5 million appropriation that was put in the bi -- in the last biennium budget. So, did you spend all \$5 million last year or the current year that we're in?

CHRIS LAVIGNE: Yeah, yeah, I believe we're on track to spend the whole \$5 million the state --

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So then how many kids are we not employing as a result of this half a million dollar cut?

CHRIS LAVIGNE: We'll have to bring that back to the working session, bring back some statistics and numbers for you to have a full dialogue.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Just for the record I'm opposed to that cut, in case you were wondering. In case it wasn't clear already. [Laughing] Under the CETC Workforce Board; who's on that board?

CHRIS LAVIGNE: The board is -- was established by the Governor's executive order no. 2 and I don't know if it's in the executive order or they've been named but there's a list of people, we can provide that, who are on the board. There's one staff

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person that's from DOL that's going to transfer to OPM to support.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): It's my understanding is that that board -- makeup of that board was established by statute according to the Governor's representatives and so I'm curious because it doesn't include any small business member. It includes fortune 500 folks and all due respect to high earners and companies that make that kind of money; how are we representing small businesses and why are not including two of our largest employers in the state and we ignore the hospitality services in the two-gaming institutions which are number seven and number eight in size of employers so I think that that is not reflective of what happens in particular in -- in and around the smaller rural communities in eastern Connecticut. So I will want to have better understanding of what that is and if we have to expand the statute that says that we're going to include small business owners and the gaming institution, that will be something that I think that will be recommended.

In regards to the job funnels, you have a job funnels project that we put \$700,000 in in year one and year two and my understanding is that money has not been apportioned out to the Hartford Jobs Funnel, that they're not getting anywhere near their -- the dollar amount that we put in here. As a matter of fact, it's fully half less than that, so I want an understanding why you do have \$700,000 here but you're not giving that money out. We made that equivalent to the New Haven Job Funnel. The \$300,000 was -- there's \$700,000 in the Hartford Job

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Funnels program but they had \$300,000 that was for other programs so this was to get them up to the same level on the jobs so maybe we need to have a specific name change and break out that, but I don't understand why -- I now for a fact that the contract with the Hartford Jobs Funnel is less than \$300,000 and so and yet it still says \$700,000 here so I'm curious about that.

And when we looked at the Spanish-American Merchant's Association which is also in Hartford, we were asked to put that in DECD by the people in Hartford who found that the Department of Labor was not user friendly and not really reflective of what they needed. According to the write-up right here, it is to provide technical assistance training and support for Latino and minority-owned small businesses. Why is the Department of Labor more reflective of small business and not the Department of Economic and Community Development? Is that not an organization that handles small businesses? It's a question.

And you have a cut in five positions. Do you know, is this reflective of the concentrated effort to put all human resources in DAS?

CHRIS LAVIGNE: Yeah, that's correct.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Okay. All right. Well I may have a couple of other questions but I'll go to Representative Lavielle, followed by Senator Hartley.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thank you. And thank you for your testimony. I have just one question and I you may not be able to give me an answer today, but

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I really find it a very pressing question. It's this move of the Office of Workforce Competitiveness to OPM. It says here for administrative purposes only. There's an awful lot of that going on. Representative Walker mentioned it, mentioned MOUs a while back, MOUs as opposing statutes and so on the issue of whether changing statutes to do things like this. That's one issue.

But the issue for me is that if you look back at -- they've moved school construction out of DIS into OPM. A couple of years ago the technical high schools went into OPM and there was another question today and for the Department of Agriculture. It's almost like it -- it looks like an office of central planning. I mean it's -- I am seriously concerned about what good does this do, and I -- if you have an answer about why you think it's happening, that would be great, but I understand also if you -- if you want to defer that for the meetings.

CHRIS LAVIGNE: Yeah, I think I'll take that back to leadership at DOL, you know. I think OWC has moved on a little bit over time so there's pros and cons and we have to flush that out and have a discussion.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Okay. I would appreciate that and I just you know, want it on the record that that's a really serious pressing question because there's just -- it's happening all over the place and it just begs a question of is this sort of a sea change in the way our government is organized, and if so, why. Thank you very much.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much, Representative. Senator Hartley followed by

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Representative Walker. [Background talking]
[Laughing]

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): So thank you for being here and of course, our best wishes to those are home recouping and telling them to stay home until they're ready to come back, thank you. Anyway, yeah my questions follow a little bit along the lines of the Chairwoman and first of all, I'm wondering if you can ask when you come back to the working group to give us a complete summary of the -- the job funnel program and all of its locations and its history in terms of line items and spending and outcomes. All right. That would be helpful. I'm understanding we have three job funnels in the state or is it four?

CHRIS LAVIGNE: Yeah, three is correct.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Three, yeah, so we need to look at that whole picture please. And -- then the other thing is, this whole conversation about you know, moving a person out and the re-constituting of the workforce board which is statute; I get it. And so there's a prescribed number of appointments, but when I saw what those appointments were, there was one, there are three workforce boards in the state. How do you leave one completely out in that -- in the composition of that board?

CHRIS LAVIGNE: Yeah, I can -- I can bring that back, but I'm not sure that's a DOL issue at this time the way the board is being constructed and composed with OPM.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Well, let me just say this, that you know the Chairwoman talked about you know

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some of the constituencies that are not represented on there. I would say to you, a continuation of that is when you have two of them, regions of the state of Connecticut and you leave a third of the region the state -- you only have two-thirds of the state there and as we know, small states that we are, we are very different in terms of our workforce, our skills level. So you know however we deal with this, and we are the legislature, we can find ways to deal with it, they need to be represented. So I'd like to -- if you can pass that along and we can figure out how to rectify that; I'd appreciate it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Representative Walker followed by Representative Dathan.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you, and I'm over here. Thank you for your testimony on behalf of (inaudible - 01:08:47) [Laughing]. She's sick too. My Lord, okay. Anyhow, thank you for -- for your testimony. I think I'm probably going to echo a lot of the things that have been said. I -- I firmly -- I know that last year we had talked about the possibility of doing a -- another agency and a couple of things and one of them was the Governor wanted to create at that time the czar of -- wasn't the czar -- no, no it wasn't manufacturing, it was workforce or something with czar and that didn't happen. But now with the creation of the Governor's workforce council, which I'm -- full disclosure, I'm a member of. This council is now becoming an agency and the agency is being created with funds from other programs to create a new agency. I'd like to know what this agency is supposed to be doing. I'd like

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to know how much money, how this money is being utilized.

I personally have concerns about this because as we've all thought about, we don't want to add more agencies and that's what we were told as a -- as a legislative body and yet we seem to be building new agencies under this. And there's a human resource agency and then there's a labor relations. So I really want more details on that.

The other concern that I have are -- are the -- the cuts that you have to your budget, and I'm going to get that in a minute as soon as I can find it. The other cuts that I have for example, the \$500,000 coming out of summer youth employment. One of the best things that we did about seven years ago was create that youth employment, the number of kids that we are impacting in a positive way is amazing. It is all over the state. It is not just in one state. This is a program that universally works with everybody in -- in the state. And to take money out of this when we cut also with all the other after-school programming and things like that is a travesty to me. We are not supporting children the way we should in this budget to make sure that they have a positive lifestyle. I really want to know what justification is for taking out money out of the -- out of youth employment.

And then -- there was another one. I guess, well, the transfer of Spanish American Association to DOL. I have concerns about also because with doing that, I have a feeling that because you're losing a lot of your staff and funding that this money is going to be used to plant some of the things that are in your

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organization and that makes me very concerned. I know people are going to say, oh, no, no, no, no, no, but -- I'm sure they'll tell me no, but that's my concern. So with that I look forward to getting answers for those things in our work session. Thank you.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Representative Dathan followed by Representative DiMassa.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I just wanted to echo my Chairwomen's comments on the youth employment program. As a mother of a teenagers that really aren't sure what they want to do with their lives and the cost of college being so expensive I think programs like these give young people an opportunity to grow up and figure out whether -- what route they want to take as a -- whether they want to go into a traditional program, two-year program or a technical program and so I'm very concerned at the cuts there.

I would love to get some statistics and I'm sure you don't have them to hand, so I would love to hear how these job funnels projects; how many people are being served. If we have maybe like an -- in each sort of area, geographical area we have the Hartford, New Haven and any other parts of the state. If we have like a three-year sort of history of that. And I would love to see how many people are being served. I was really optimistic last year and it's -- and I'm glad to see that there's consistent funding on opportunities for long-term unemployed people 'cause the stats show that those are really hard people to find new jobs and I'm glad to see there's a commitment. But I would love to

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see what sort of return we have seen on that project in terms of we increased -- doubled the budget between 19 and 20. How many people have been served as a result of that. And are -- with the sort of average salaries coming out of those programs, how long they've been employment, and really to get some sort of hard data for that.

And then likewise with these other pipeline initiatives for the manufacturing, again we've doubled our budget in the biennium over what we had previously. What sort of data did we have to show that that was a good way that we've spent our money? So if you can do data on that, I'd appreciate it. Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Representative Dillan.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thank you, very much. On the youth employment, I wonder if you could get us some -- some numbers on the unemployment level of the -- of the young people. The programs -- this writeup specifically targets these dollars to economically disadvantaged youth from age 14 to 21 if their family income is below 185 percent of federal poverty. I don't know whether or not this program has ever been enough for that group, but I guess I would be curious to know about what's going on in that demographic year over year and whether or not someone who is doing the budget made a judgement -- actually the economic prospects of that particular group have improved since last year, and therefore they thought that this program wasn't needed. That is not my intuitive sense, but I would like to hear

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what numbers you have to justify cutting that program.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you, are there any other comments or questions? Please let everybody know that we'd like them to get well. I'm sorry, Representative DiMassa, I'm sorry. I thought I already called you, I'm sorry. Jeez Louis, I just put Pat ahead of you.

REP. DIMASSA (116TH): That's quite all right, Senator. A number of this -- I don't want to belabor the point, just a few quick things and I know a lot of it you'll take back and will look at it in the working groups, but obviously I also have concerns about the director's position. I feel OPMs umbrella, and I think Representative Lavielle also touched on this. The OPM umbrella is getting larger, and larger, and larger and I have some concerns about how that's going to work together.

Obviously the youth employment program, I'm completely against backing into a number. You know you stated we spend all those dollars and I personally can tell you I see an overwhelming amount of applicants who can't even get into that program every year who qualify for it so cutting that program in my mind is unacceptable. The Jobs Funnel, I would appreciate that data.

The SAMA the Transfer for Spanish Americans Merchants Association. This is interesting because Senator Hartley and I worked extensively on this last year. We actually transferred it over and the reason we did it was we saw synergies with DECD, especially since they deal with minority-owned small

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businesses. It's certainly concerning to me that an MOU was entered into to kind of almost circumvent or legislative process which I have serious concerns with. So I really would like a detailed explanation brought back to the work group on the cause of that, and really any other -- you know, just to take us back in DOL, any other MOUs that you think we should be aware of, I would appreciate anything new and the legislature would appreciate that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. So now you know that none of us like the youth employment cut. None of us think that SAMA belongs in the Department of Labor no matter what the Department of Labor may think, and we all want to know if you're really putting out the dollars on the programs that we actually funded last year, and we find it disconcerting that the dollar -- the true dollars that we put into many of these manufacturing and job funnels program were just removed right after we had agreement that they would be funded. So those are concerns of ours. Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you. I have one more, I'm sorry. It was the Performance Theater Grant Funding to reflect current needs and it's not --

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): He's still DOL. That's for the next one.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Okay.

CHRIS LAVIGNE: I was about to get confused.
[Laughing]

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REP. WALKER (93RD): You were going to take notes and be very quiet. [Laughing]

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Thank you very much. Tell them all to get better.

CHRIS LAVIGNE: Yes.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Next up is the Department of Economic and Community Development, which I don't think they're here yet. Thank you, Brandon. And is Department of Energy and Environmental Protection here? All right. All right. Well, we'll stand down for ten minutes and try to regroup immediately.

Good afternoon, Commissioner. How are you?

DAVID LEHMAN: Very well, thank you Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): We were going to give your spot away if DEEP came before you but you're here first so, if you want to go ahead and start.

DAVID LEHMAN: We try to be respectful of DEEP, but we'll take a spot for now.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): [Laughing] Okay, go ahead and start, Commissioner.

DAVID LEHMAN: Sure, and Senator Osten, would you like me to read the testimony? I know it's [crosstalk].

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): No, you can actually -- we can all read it, if you just want to give us the highlights.

DAVID LEHMAN: Very good.

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SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): We would really like that.
[Laughing]

DAVID LEHMAN: Deputy Commissioner Thames are here and we are happy to just do highlights. I think the good news is, there was not a -- there were not very many significant, if any significant changes to the budget for DECD that are proposed in the midterm. I think if you look at the biggest numbers on the page there's a realignment of funding between DOL and DECD for SAMA, the Spanish American Merchant's Association, which is really an up-down between agencies.

The other thing that's probably most notable is the \$70,000 to a resource of FTE that was at the ACD. That will be going to the office of Workforce Competitiveness to support workers, Representative Walker as well, for the Governor's Workforce Council. You know that is an initiative that we are very supportive of at the ACD and the impact that should have on the state and the state's workforce. So, we're losing a headcount there, but in our opinion that's a very, very valuable initiative that the Governor's supporting.

Otherwise there are very small changes -- small adjustments to funding. We lost some money for a theater that was dissolved, and then there's moderate reductions to Hartford 2000 and a few other small expenses, but not a lot changed and certainly we feel we can live with the changes that have been proposed.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much. So, I don't know if -- although we did have this

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conversation with the Secretary of the Office of Policy Management, on the Spanish American Merchant's Association -- I'll just start, just so you know I'll start off with questioning. That was an initiative that the legislature had and two of the members that sit on the Appropriations Committee moved it over to you because we felt that you had more affinity with the small workforce and minority workforce development so we're not necessarily in favor of moving it back to the Department of Labor unless you can provide compelling reasons for us. And you could bring information to the subcommittee level. That was truly something that we felt was going to see better development under the offices of the Department of Economic and Community Development. So just that you know that that's not something that we were currently in favor of.

DAVID LEHMAN: Yeah, we're certainly happy to have a conversation off line at the subcommittee level about who's best to administer that, if it's DCD or DOL. And obviously we have experience with SAMA and with small business lending, but we can take that off line. I was not aware of the legislature's feeling on that.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So I'm certainly going to get a couple more questions from people that are here today so I just want you to know about that, and so we are going to have more specific questions at the subcommittee level, that would be great.

In regards to the Office Workforce Competitiveness and the Workforce Council. [Background talking] It's just not working and I'm short of throwing it behind us. I decided not to do that. I did that

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last week. [Laughing] I again say that I am not in favor of this body and its current configuration. It does not include some of our largest employers in the state and I keep saying this, I feel that it's disrespectful to the gaming institution when they are number seven and number eight respectively and top employers that they have. And while they may not be a fortune 500 company, they clearly provide us more revenue than fortune 500 companies do. They clearly provide as many jobs as those companies do.

And so you know, I can't say it enough times and whether or not -- last time someone threw back, not you but somebody else, threw back well that's how it is in statute. I didn't know in statute we said, only fortune 500 companies care about workforce and workforce development. So I'm -- if I have to, we'll change the statute if that's what we have to do but we really need to broaden that out. I get calls from small business owners who feel that that level does not have anything to do with some of the smaller restaurants or somebody that might provide some of that, so I'd like to at least put that comment into your thinking and maybe at the subcommittee level come up with a suggestion on how we can include and be more respectful.

DAVID LEHMAN: Sure and just one point of clarification. There are smaller businesses that are currently on the council.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Yep.

DAVID LEHMAN: Sound Manufacturing, so there's not a fortune 500 stipulation. It's meant to include

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small to large companies but I understand your point on the casinos.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So again, number seven and number eight respectively and I think they've only gone up, not down in the number of -- in the top employers in the state. Number one and two are the top amount of n we get; I think we should include them in things. I personally find it very offensive.

And so, those are -- I know that there are -- we do have a question on United Theater sponsors, which again appears to have been disbanded. We're uncertain why that is. So do you have any -- why did it happen?

DAVID LEHMAN: Why it was dissolved? I don't have the full background on that theater in particular, but we can provide a full answer in terms of why that happened.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So is there anybody that has any questions? Representative Walker followed by Senator Hartley followed by Representative Dathan.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you and good afternoon. Good to see you.

DAVID LEHMAN: Good afternoon.

REP. WALKER (93RD): I guess I do also want to sort of piggyback off of what my co-chair talked about. I also want to get a little bit more detail on the -- at the SAMA movement. We're still trying to figure that one out and when I talked to some of the people from SAMA, they were sort of, "oh, we didn't know." And so this was definitely an issue that was

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decided by the executive branch without talking to the people there, so that I have a real problem with.

The other one that I was concerned about was -- there's one other one. The performing, the merchants, oh, Office of Workforce Competitiveness. I just -- I -- we seem to be creating a lot of agencies and we're moving things around and we need to have a little bit more detail. I mean I'm on the workforce, the Governor's Workforce Council, but the charge of what we're going to do and how we're going to do it is still evolving. And we're now making this an agency so I'd like to have those details before this agency comes up about what are we going to be doing and how is it going to be structured, so I would like to get that information.

DAVID LEHMAN: Sure, and that -- it will be within OPM as it's currently envisioned but certainly we're putting more resources and advocating for putting more resources toward --

REP. WALKER (93RD): We seem to be moving a lot of things into OPM and out of the mainstream which is getting very concerning to a lot of us. As we start to go through this budget we're noticing more of what things are going to OPM, which makes it sort of off the grid for us and we have a problem with that.

DAVID LEHMAN: So happy to follow up more on those resources.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you, thank you, thank you, Madam Chair.

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SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Senator Hartley followed by Representative Dathan, followed by Representative Lavielle.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Thank you, Madam Chair and to our Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, thanks for being with us today. And you know when we get to our next iteration of meetings we can get to more of the weeds kind of thing. But you know, there's a lot of discussion about the SAMA and I'm for one, curious about -- so we made some changes last biennium and they were executed by virtue of an MOU. I guess I'm curious about that MOU was and how it was executed and what was done. So if you could you know maybe share that with us when we next reconvene, that would be instructive. And also help us to understand you know this ping-pong ball effect you know of moving us back and forth. That's the intention here, let's get to where we want.

To your point, Commissioner yes indeed your charge is about the economy, growing business and in particular focusing on some of the places where we've really been stuck in the mud and that is with small business and minority businesses and that is exactly what SAMA is about. So maybe we can look at that history of that MOU.

And then I'm interested you know; we've got all the line items here and we made some changes on the tourism councils and so forth. We've got the Main Street Initiative. Is there any part of that grant working with them through the department that we ask them to leverage money? We ask them to you know, have value added, bring in partners.

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DAVID LEHMAN: So in terms of specifics around that if there's a specific statement as to what that leverage is. I'm not sure if there is one. Certainly the intention is to make sure there's valuable and that we're maximizing the impact to the extent that there can be private sector dollars alongside the public sector, great, but we'll need to confirm if there is an actual stipulation on that; I'm not aware.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): And if not, then how do we begin to do that and look at it in a different way because this is really, going forward about you know, having partnerships and kind of breaking down those silos and working in a different way. So I think that might one particular area where we could.

And the other piece of that would be on the tourism agenda. You know we have -- last session put some legislation out there to allow them, the districts that is, to use the state grant to try then to leverage private money and I would like to know how we did with that and is there an opportunity to incentivize that to an even greater degree.

DAVID LEHMAN: Senator, would you like that to be a followup or?

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Yeah, when we get into the small groups, one will guide us. Okay. And then you know, I just want to raise one point here and you know I for one am enthused about the change of the perspective in the program that is going to be the earn as you go or Jobs CT. But I think we're going to have to look long and hard about those industries that we're focusing on, okay. And have a

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you know detailed conversation about those that aren't on the list to make sure that in fact we're comfortable.

DAVID LEHMAN: Understood.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Okay.

DAVID LEHMAN: We welcome that discourse.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Yeah, that would be helpful. Thank you very much, and thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Representative Dathan, followed by Representative Lavielle, followed by Senator Formica.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Thank you very much, Madam Chair and thank you very much to your agency. I love the work that you do with Make Connecticut Great. I am very enthused about all of the different organizations that we grant money to, it's about \$13 million. Does, I'm sure you all do, but do you produce any sort of report that does any sort of return analysis on funds that we invest in this and how -- how it is stimulating our economy both in terms of tourism but job growth and other activities.

DAVID LEHMAN: So the DCD Annual Report is certainly where there is discretion and where we can measure a lot of the impact. We do try to quantify the return where possible, or at the very least the cost relative to whatever the appropriate measure is for the recipient. There are certain priorities that were identified that are line items in the budget where we're not able to measure that; that are just

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grants. But where we can measure it, we do an annual report.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): And with the places that you're not able to measure, do you have communications with these individual entities to find out how the dollars are being spent and any sort of attendance or whatever their metrics are, just to kind of make sure that we're appropriately following the standards of everything.

DAVID LEHMAN: Yeah, I'll make a comment and then Deputy Commissioner Thames can just in here too. There's definitely dialogue and there's a process to oversee the grant when DEC's doing it if it's coming through the general fund but it really is going to depend, and we could come up with metrics for each of them even if it is attendance and your example, to understand what the value is per that entire dollar to that institution. It's going to be different for each institution though.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): I would love to see a report.

DAVID LEHMAN: Yeah, and I really want to bifurcate where there is discretion, especially in some of the incentive programs in the past, there we absolutely look to measure that and quantify the benefit to the taxpayer for those dollars. So that distinction I just want to draw. Gwen, I'm not sure if you want to add.

GWEDOLYN THAMES: Yeah, I mean again just to echo your points; all of the grants that we disperse through the general fund, we have milestones, scope of work deliverables that are expected of our grantees that we have project managers that actively

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you know, measure those for compliance. So if you wanted you know, more collective, wholesome report on kind of you know, what community benefit are they providing; I'm sure the team can put that together so that's something we can definitely follow up on.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): I would love to see that. And I know -- just a second question if I may. The Hartford 2000, I know it's really small, but has this -- I noticed that there was a cut and this is a fairly new initiative in the first place. Was the rationale behind the cut, is it just wasn't working out or we kind of over estimated how much this would be because presumably I think we want to encourage small businesses here in Hartford and would love to hear why we're cutting it just overall from a strategic point of view.

DAVID LEHMAN: So, I'll make a quick comment and then Gwen can jump in, but we absolutely want to encourage business formation in places like Hartford and Connecticut cities. I think that's crucial for the state as a whole. I think with Hartford 2000, the first year of contracting we're just completing the \$20,000 so the start and getting to where we are right now is a bit later so the question is in my mind, could they spend another \$20,000 in the 12 months that we're about to embark on come July, just given the late start, and that I think that was some of the rationale behind the cut. 'Cause we feel like they've got significant dollars right now to execute upon their plan from the first year, which we just completed the contract.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Got it. Are we focusing on minority businesses and that initiative?

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GWENDOLYN THAMES: So this initiative is focused specifically on job placement and working with 15 to 20 under employed and unemployed individuals in the Hartford area and getting them access to career readiness opportunities and eventually job placement. That's the scope of this particular proposal.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): What is that restaurant organization that we saw last year that testified? I think it was a local restaurant or deli or something --

GWEDOLYN THAMES: The Hartford Max?

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Yeah.

GWEDOLYN THAMES: No, this is actually the umbrella organization in Hartford that comprises the neighborhood revitalization zones so they're charged with improving the quality of life and development in the 17 neighborhoods in Hartford. And so again, this was a new program that was a new addition to the biennium this year and so we're in the first year of that program that we just went to contract with, but it's specifically focused on job placement.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Got it, thank you.

DAVID LEHMAN: Yeah, and we realize this is not the form but Deputy Commissioner Thames has led an initiative where we're going to be extremely focused on minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, capitol for business for formation in our cities and beyond, so more to come at Commerce

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and the Finance Committee on that, but that's going to be a huge initiative of ours this session.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Can't wait to hear about it. Thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much. Representative Lavielle, followed by Senator Formica, followed by Representative DiMassa.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thank you, and good afternoon and thank you for being here with us. So you know I've -- I don't know how many of these budget briefings with DACD over the years I've sat in and we always look at a very long list of excellent organizations that we fund and a few other things like for example, the Spanish American Merchant's Association, a couple of other things here. This year we're talking about the Office of Workforce Development. But the thing that we seem to talk the least about is actual marketing of Connecticut outside the state, trying to get businesses to come here, so my question pertains to that. And I have to say I appreciate Commissioner, your initiatives to get away from the corporate -- corporate welfare as they say, kinds of things and making businesses meet a goal before they can get any incentive money or incentive credits.

But I know that CERC has been a beast up and assigned some work in the area of attracting businesses and I've heard some of the thinking and it's very good. The state funds CERC partially and I'd like to know how you dovetail with them, and if you happen to know exactly out of what line their

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funding comes from because I don't recall it at the moment. But how are those divvies divided up and how are the resources divided up so that we know exactly how our state agencies or with CERC as it were not a state agency are focusing on that key goal of recruiting businesses to come here, which I think is primordial and you have to do that before we're going to be able to do any of this for much longer. If we don't grow, we'll get nowhere. And I know you agree with that. So, can you tell me a little bit about that relationship?

DAVID LEHMAN: There's a lot to unpack there but let me try to be as concise as possible. So, the first is as many of you may be aware, CERC was renamed to AdvanceCT. The thought being acronyms, alphabet soup not very attractive and a better way to recruit and have a brand identity is to rename similar to other states. So, AdvanceCT is a partner of DECD's. The way that we have funded it, it is a not for profit and they derive roughly half of their funding from the private sector through raising funds from their constituents in other ways, but that's been funded through the Manufacturer's Assistance Act, so it's not been funded over the recent past through the general fund but through bonding dollars, which is something I think we should explore changing in the future.

The way that -- the way that I think about the allocation of resources on the branding front in particular is the state needs to own its own brand, and we can have a broader debate about the overall marketing dollars and torsion dollars for the state holistically but what CERC is going to be more

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focused on now as it relates to retention and ultimately recruitment is the branding for business, really economic development is making sure businesses identify Connecticut as a place that they want to be. And also what CERC is going to be doing a lot more of is, we're going to be much more focused at target industries and this is consistent with the Job CT legislation that we're putting forth. We want to make sure we're focused on industries that we think have a comparative advantage of being in Connecticut. But first and foremost we're really focused on companies that are here and want to grow here, and make sure that this is the place that they want to grow as opposed to leave. And then there's a recruitment that's being overlaid on that where we're looking to the current cluster for air space in the fence, for example. And we're figuring out who should be part of the supply chain. Who should be in Connecticut alongside the great density of employers we have there?

So that's the effort that CERC's really undertaking under Peter Denious' leadership and we continue to look for more people to fill out the roles there but that's -- I'll stop there and I can answer any followups, but that's a bit of the bifurcation where the state's going to own the brand holistically for the Connecticut and the marketing but CERC's going to focus just on the marketing to business.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): So does that mean that within DECD there are no resources dedicated to marketing to business or -- 'cause I'm really interested in how that divides up and how -- what we

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are funding with -- with state money. What does that cover and what does it not cover?

DAVID LEHMAN: So we do have resources that are -- that are focused on the statewide marketing brand. As Deputy Commissioner Thames just pointed out, it's a little over \$4 million in the budget. And that covers -- that's inclusive of tourism, but that's the brand including business. I think we're looking to further build out resources to brand more to business in the future lead by AdvanceCT, but to date we have multiple people at the ECD that are focused the state's brand including the business.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): So in essence what -- if I'm understanding this properly, I don't mean to be dense, but in the -- on the DECD end it's really more of a branding exercise and on the AdvaceCT end it's more of an active recruitment exercise?

DAVID LEHMAN: Yes, I feel like we're confusing branding versus the tactics of the recruitment. To date DECD has owned the brand in the statewide marketing. That includes the tourism team that's here, what was the Still Revolutionary Campaign that everyone is so aware and fond of, as well as some of the tactical stuff we've done on the business front. The goal is to -- as AdvanceCT plays a bigger role on retention and recruitment, for them to own more of the brand and the marketing efforts to businesses in particular. Where DECD is going to own the holistic brand for the state as we should, including attracting residents for example and tourism.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Okay. And so therefore the -- the activity -- most of the execution activity,

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I'll just call it that, that AdvanceCT is doing, we're envisioning that that will ultimately be partially paid for by bonding, not by appropriations and also by private businesses.

DAVID LEHMAN: Well, my hope in the future again is that we figure out a way to -- for the public component of that to be in the general fund ultimately, but right now that's just not possible but it should absolutely be a public private partnership where 50 percent or potentially more of those dollars comes from the private sector.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Okay. I just think it's important that we know exactly what the taxpayer money or the bonded money that's funded with taxpayer debt service, what the activity actually is. You know how it's divided up, what -- what, so that we can judge what we are getting for what we're paying for.

DAVID LEHMAN: Agreed. And there's a -- there's a rigorous process that we could perhaps take offline in terms of what we get on a quarterly basis, making sure that the money's being spent how we think it should be spent, so there's a lot of oversight on that.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): That would be great. I'd appreciate having more information on that. Thank you.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Senator Formica followed by Representative DiMassa.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon.

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DAVID LEHMAN: Good afternoon.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you for your good works. My question revolves around the tourism fund that -- that is listed here, but the tourism fund is generated from a percentage of the hotel tax. And it's hard to get an exact number, right. We know that it's not going to come at \$13069, right. So if it comes in higher, is there -- is it up to us to redirect that or where does that go? Does that stay within the agency? In otherward if we're getting -- what are we getting 10 percent of the 15 percent hotel tax, so I believe that's -- that's basically the number. So if that comes in at a number you know that exceeds this million, we get that -- that goes to you to determine, right?

DAVID LEHMAN: Randy who runs tourism can run it. I'm not sure if that's formulaic if there's discretion if that number goes higher or lower. Randy, do you want to answer that?

RANDY FIVEASH: Thank you, Senator. Right now that's one of the --

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Excuse me, you have to -- you have to state your name for the record, sir.

RANDY FIVEASH: I'm sorry. I'm Randy Fiveash and I'm the Director of Tourism for the state for DCD. Thank you for the question, Senator. Right now we do -- there is 10 percent legislated to go into the tourism fund. There is not a formula that is designated for what goes where. So there's -- right now the legislature designates the number of dollars that go into statewide tourism marketing and the number of dollars that go into each one of the

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individual funds. So there's not a -- the \$4.2 for example, almost \$4.2 that goes to statewide tourism marketing is designated directly by the legislature.

So what we talked about last session as you'll remember, Senator was there being a formula that designates that. So if there is -- when there is growth, and there will be growth, that it doesn't fall into a black hole somewhere. That that 10 percent doesn't just go somewhere. Legislature says 10 percent but then it just falls into a black hole. So there is a 60 percent or whatever that amounts to that goes to statewide tourism marketing so that your wishes are met, that there is a growth in statewide tourism marketing.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): So thank you very much. And I asked the question 'cause I knew you were sitting there. No offense to the Commissioner; but what I'm trying to get to, if we can -- if that number comes in and say \$15 million and there's an extra million dollars, can we just take that access fund and direct it to statewide marketing. And that way we wouldn't have to go through all of these different grantees that are -- that are listed under there and try to do a proportionate ad to every -- to 40 different grantees. We just say if we've got an extra million or \$500,000 or \$38 dollars, whatever it is, let's increase statewide marketing because that gives us an opportunity to --

RANDY FIVEASH: My understanding, Senator is -- my understanding is from the legislation, as the legislature that is -- that is your prerogative under the legislation to do that. That money, the

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10 percent goes -- the legislation says 10 percent goes there, so you can do that.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): So if the legislature -- the legislation says 10 percent goes to this fund, I've got to talk to the bosses to my right here and say we've got to make sure that that 10 percent goes --

RANDY FIVEASH: To Statewide Tourism Marketing, yes.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): -- to Statewide Tourism Marketing. Because I believe the Passport to Parks, if we had a thousand new cars get registered and we've got \$10 more on each registration, that money goes to Passport to Parks to support the park, right. So you cant just say there's a flat dollar amount allocated. The rest goes somewhere else, so.

RANDY FISHASH: That is my understanding of the legislation, sir.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): All right. So you feel that you would need to be directed by the -- either this Committee or the budget document or something that says, you can take the excess money and direct it toward --

RANDY FISHASH: Yes, sir. Unless there is a very simple, what we proposed to you last year was unless there is a very simple -- very simple change in that -- in that language that says there is a formula that says what goes directly into Statewide Tourism Marketing. Then the legislature doesn't ever have to deal with that again.

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SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): All right. So if we could -
- to the focus group if we could bring that formula,
your ideas on this formula we can [crosstalk].

RANDY FISHASH: We can do that, yes sir.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): And that was my question.
Thank you very much. Thank you, Commissioner for
all your work.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Representative
DiMassa.

REP. DIMASSA (116TH): Thank you, Madam Chair.
Commissioner, it's good to see you. I walked in the
middle of the SAMA discussion so forgive me if this
is a repeat. I don't want to belabor the point, but
I also want to be fair and say the same things to
you that I said to Labor.

Representative -- Senator Hartley and I worked
diligently last year to move this money from DOL to
DECD because we saw the potential for synergy there
with some of the functions that you already do with
small businesses and it's concerning to us that
there was an MOU entered into, basically without
this Committee's knowledge, basically revert that
back to DOL. I'm assuming long before you know,
you're proposing these dollars being moved. And I
would also be curious through the Chair, you know
any other MOUs that you know of with your agency,
whether you've taken on responsibilities from other
agencies or you dolled out responsibilities, we
could get copies of those through the Chair; I would
like to see those. I'm assuming that you signed
this MOU because I've seen it and a few others and I
believe both Commissioners at both agencies have to

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sign off unless you designate someone else. But I would look forward to seeing that.

And the only other comment, as far as programs. We're seeing a lot this year as far as achieving savings, reductions in different line items. I just caution everybody that you know, it's one thing to reduce a program that's either under performing or isn't meeting expectations. I don't like to make it a habit of reducing programs that are working or they're meeting expectations just to back into a number.

Relatively you know I know we have to make certain cuts, but at the same time let's look for programs that are not meeting expectations. So certainly for the working group, if you could provide further information on Hartford 2000 and some of these other reductions just to show their need, that would be appreciated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

DAVID LEHMAN: Sure. If I could just address, Representative DiMassa, we're happy to dig into that. I think we have a bit more of a history of terms of the -- this Committee and the initiative so we can take that offline. I'm not familiar with that MOU sitting here today. But typically when we are -- when DECD is asked to administer something, we do it. There are times when we do enter MOUs for various reasons and we can talk about that but our goal is to make sure that that -- the administration of those, like SAMA is in the most efficient place, so we welcome that debate. Deputy Commissioner Thames has one point on this end.

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GWEN THAMES: Yeah, I just wanted to add you know, this was included in the biennium this year through our agency as you suggested. We were asked by OPM to do an interagency agreement with DOL. And so hence the MOU and that's kind of the historical knowledge from our perspective with David and myself both coming in this year and this biennium. So we're happy to provide a copy of that for your review. But just to give some context, that's kind of the history of what happens to date with respect to it being at DOL and then being moved to DECD in this biennium, and then the request to move it back to DOL through the interagency agreement.

REP. DIMASSA (116TH): And I appreciate that explanation. My -- my concern is that there's a broad theme of the legislature and one of our powers is through setting policies is with the budget, and my concern is that when we set policy through a budget I don't want to see it circumvented by 100 MOUs out there going through OPM because that's really not the intent of what this legislature voted on. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you, and I can't concur more with Representative DiMassa, and in particular when we ask for certain things and have discussion with the Office of Policy Management staff to -- and go line item by line item by line item to talk about certain things to have it change after, leaves a bad taste in the mouth of the people that have to vote on something.

DAVID LEHMAN: Senator, we hear you guys loud and clear and we want to discuss this more closely with you.

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SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Are there any other questions or comments? Senator Hartley again. [Laughing]

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): For the second time, thank you. No, just -- this last year, okay. Now you're going -- we're going to double up. [Laughing]

DAVID LEHMAN: I was here for part of it, but it's all a blur.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): So on a statewide marketing, I'd like a summary of what that \$4.2 is going for, how many FTEs we have there, how are you measuring our penetration, where are we going, what's digital, what's not --

DAVID LEHMAN: We've got it.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Okay. And then the same thing with the tourism districts. Okay. We've got three tourism districts and they're each getting \$400. We'd like to know because we're having some conversation about accountabilities there. And then you know, when we get in that smaller group just give us a -- what the Stanford Downtown Special District is, what does it do. What about the Cultural Alliance for Fairfield? Who are they, what do they do, what have they produced? I think that's -- oh, and then the other thing is, I know we get this in the past but yeah, who comprises the Flagship Theaters, what's their breakdown. Same thing for the Arts Centers and the Performance Theater Grants. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much. Are there any other comments or questions? Seeing none, thank you very much Commissioner and Deputy

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Commissioner. You have a nice day. We'll see you in the subcommittee.

DAVID LEHMAN: Thank you for your time.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): And we have next up is DEEP, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Good afternoon, Commissioner. How are you?

KATIE DYKES: Well, thank you so much Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): You have testimony. We have this testimony, so if you would, you don't need to read it to us; summarizing would be just fine.

KATIE DYKES: Okay. Senator, Osten, Representative Walker, I know Senator Formica was here a little earlier, Representative Lavielle, and members of the Appropriations Committee, I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Governor Lamont's proposed Fiscal Year 2020-21 Recommended Budget Adjustments for our department, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Obviously we support the Governor's budget adjustments. As you indicated, we provided the written testimony. It highlights some of the key policy initiatives that we are advancing with these adjustments to address emerging issues.

These include implementation of the task -- the recommendations of the Governor's task force on PFAS, an emerging contaminate in the state. Making some -- also adjustments to, enhance our ability to respond to EEE virus as we saw some tragic loss of life related to that virus last year, and so with our responsibility with respect to our wetland habit

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-- habitat and the Mosquito Management program there are adjustments in this -- in this budget amendment that support that enhanced work.

We also have a few of adjustment recommendations related to our Emergency Spill Response Account, reflecting historical expenditures, some realignment for the Environmental Conservation Account to the Hatcheries Account. And a reduction of four Public Utility Control Funded positions.

I recognize the Committee is working efficiently today so I'm happy to limit my summary of the written testimony and hear any questions that the Committee may have.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much. And I'm going -- I'm going to start. In your budget summary you remove \$985,000 in personnel services and I see a reduction of four people. Obviously \$985,000 is more than four people.

KATIE DYKES: Let me introduce -- Senator Osten, I'm pleased to introduce the Bureau Chief for our Bureau of Central Services, Dennis Thibodeau who will provide the response.

DENNIS THIBODEAU:A Hi Senator. So that -- that reduction is really covering general fund positions and PUP positions and we -- this is really the consolidation that is happening for the most part, so we're -- 11 positions are moved off of the general fund based on HR Labor Relations Consolidation into PUP funds. PS will be moving as well and we're adding one position for mosquito. And so that's really a PS adjustment that you're seeing there.

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SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): And then you're moving some positions into the Passport to Parks?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: The proposal has seven positions going from general fund PS into Passport.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): 'Cause I know we moved a lot of positions last year into the Passport to Parks. What are these positions for?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: These are directly related to parks operations. These are our maintainers and supervisors within parks operations. So last year we moved 35 positions that were directly related to parks operations. Not the whole parks operations has over 80 people, so this is a subset of that.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So how many people are being paid for out of the Passport to Parks now?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Currently there's 35.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Total of 35?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: 35, right.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Okay. 'Cause I thought we put some originally into Passport to Parks and the second year we added 35 more on top of that, or is it a total of 35 that are in Passport to Parks?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Total of 35.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): And now you're adding seven more to bring it up to 42, but there's 38 other people that are associated with Passport -- that are associated with the parks?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Park Operations.

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SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): That you want to bring over eventually; is that the goal?

KATIE DYKES: That's beyond the scope of the budget discussion here. We're just talking about the seven additional --

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Do you have a plan to move them over eventually is my question.

KATIE DYKES: There's no plan that I can speak to but we're happy to talk -- the support for moving these positions onto Passport I think is in line with the authorization of Passport operations and maintenance in the parks.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): I just want to know as we get more real dollars in on Passport to Parks to -- are we looking to move those 38 other positions over also is my question. Because also part of the Passport to Parks was us to take on some of the capitol projects that were associated with the parks to get those done. So I want to make sure that we're not using the Passport to Parks moving over positions each year that doesn't allow us to complete the total concept of Passport to Parks.

KATIE DYKES: Well certainly I think that Passport has been a real success. We're in now -- beginning the third year of the effectiveness of that program. We support obviously these fulltime positions that have been moved over to date, the 35 staff as well as support for seasonal staff, salary and fridge costs, and I should underscore how important those seasonal positions are as well to providing the operations and maintenance and amenities that we enjoy with the parks.

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You know, we've seen with the support of Passport, including the staffing that is -- that is supporting, a lot more predictability that we can budget around for the operation of the parks. It's enabled us to reopen four state park campgrounds that were previously closed in 2018, adding spring and fall camping at a number of different parks, expanding our lifeguard coverage and restoring some of our museum and nature center hours at several of our popular parks. So I think there's a direct nexus to having the certainty around the staffing, both fulltime and seasonal to providing expanded services for the public.

And I should indicate as well that just last year another successive Passport with the elimination of the parking fees for the instate visitors, we saw a 10 percent across the board in visitor ship to the parks which is very, very significant and our team has worked hard to be able to provide the quality of service on the people accept and deserve at the parks with that increased popularity.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So on the 38 and the 7 are they all fulltime employees, or are they part-time employees?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: It's 35 and 7, it will be 42 if the budget is accepted. It's all fulltime employees, primarily maintainers and supervisors [crosstalk].

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): And how many part-time or seasonal employees does the Passport to Parks pay for?

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DENNIS THIBODEAU: We have over 500 seasonals in the parks operation alone, so across the -- you know some central services, people that support state parks, over 600 seasonals.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Okay. And are any of that -- what is the age range of the seasonal employees; do you know?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: We have some folks that can probably speak to it. I can -- the best -- I mean it's a wide range. You'll see people that you know are retired people that come in and work in our state park system and they're fantastic. We're very fortunate to have them. And we have kids right out of high school and kids coming from college.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Do you have anyone that's of the age of 14 to 18? Are there any summer youth employment programs that are associated with this? You can come up if you want. Just remember to identify yourself.

KATIE DYKES: I'd like to introduce you to our Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Mike Lambert.

MICHAEL LAMBERT: Thank you, Senator. Primarily we hire --

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): You have to say who you are.

MICHAEL LAMBERT: I'm Michael Lambert. I'm the Bureau Chief of Outdoor Recreations.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you.

MICHAEL LAMBERT: Senator, primarily we hire high school age students and above. So typically 18 and

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above, but we do have a wide range of employees. One of the things we've seen with the Passport is we do have the ability to hire retired individuals to help in the shorter seasons, so this has been a huge benefit to us at our current operations level.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. So you might as well stay because I -- do you have anything to do with the hatcheries?

MICHAEL LAMBERT: I do not, ma'am.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Oh, darn, darn. [Laughing] Did you say that there is some movement amongst the hatcheries too in your brief? Can you please go into that?

KATIE DYKES: Senator, so this is a \$2,000 -- \$200,000 excuse me, realignment from the Environmental Conservation Account to the Hatchery's Account. I'll let Dennis speak to the details of that.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): All right.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Yeah it's properly aligned in the funds. When we added the hatchery line item, I think it was 2018 there was a new line item where we moved some general fund PS and OE into a dedicated line item so we could call it hatchery costs. This is really -- when we made that change it was already dated. We didn't have full staffing levels then so this brings up the staffing levels internal transfer from ECCs to the Hatcher Account, so there's no net impact to the overall general fund, but it's properly aligned in funds within the Hatchery Account.

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SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So there's no loss of services or no closings of the hatcheries at all?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: No, not at all.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Okay.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Yeah.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): I know that other people -- I have questions but I know they'll probably be covered by others. And on the eliminate funding for the West River Watershed; did that never go out? West River Watershed reduced funding by \$100,000.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Are you asking the grant was distributed this year?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Yes.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: It hasn't been distributed yet but it's been going out every year, we've distributed that grant.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Sorry, thank you, Representative Walker. [Laughing] So it hasn't been distributed yet but it says eliminate funding, so are you just eliminating the program or the work that we are doing there?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: This adjustment would be for the next fiscal year.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Yep.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: That's what's being proposed.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Okay. Thank you.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Yep.

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SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Are there any questions?
Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Good afternoon, Commissioner and associates. My question has to do with the practical mechanics of the change in the PASHR formula showing a significant reduction in spending and I'm seeing it across a lot of the budgets that we -- this is \$850,000 or so; whatever the number is on this. What actually happened? Those personnel are being transferred to DAS in a different location. So are we creating a new office for all them, and so does that mean you have a lot of office space and desks somewhere or how does, you know?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: I'll answer this. So the consolidation most of our folks are going to be sitting in the same seats. We have business partners within our organization and we'll have support. I think they're -- they're going to find synergies and efficiencies by doing this, just being under one roof under DAS. You know if you go across agencies everybody has a little bit of a different HR model and I think again this is to really gain some efficiencies and add some back office support.

So the positions, they are moved from our budget to DAS' budget, but for the most part people stay in our agency and work directly with us to support our operations.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): And so the savings comes from technology?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: There's some of that --

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SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Software --

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Yeah, I'm --

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): 'Cause they're doing -- they're doing the same work pretty much if you have the same people, you know what I'm saying.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Right.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): And -- well, I'm sorry to interrupt you but if I just finish my thought at my age, sometimes they just don't come back, you know. [Laughing] But if you have the -- if the 226 people sitting in your area and they're doing work for HR, are they doing work for HR just for you guys or do they end up saying maybe they'll do work for DOT or however that is and then my followup question is, what happens to the 800 people at DOT. I'm trying to understand how the savings is actually practically managed.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Yeah, I could start and Katie could probably finish it. You know, I think they look long-term you know through attrition they're going to be able to do a lot more with fewer people. I mean that's been pretty clear when they came out with this consolidation. And again they're going to find efficiencies. I see everything from personnel records -- right now they're all on paper in agencies, redundancy, you know they're going to automate that process where you know that can be managed centrally electronically and you can share those records, adding integrity to records. So I mean there's a lot of different efficiencies that are going to be part of this process. They started job apps and that's our recruitment tool that we use

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right now and they're -- and there's some business intelligence in there where it's improving our process dramatically and creating efficiency. So I -- you know I don't think you're going to have the same number of people sitting in an HR seat. I think the overall number is probably 300 maybe, close in that range across state executive branch state agencies. And I think over time as they realize some of these efficiencies that number will shrink. But there's no elimination of positions right now. But long term I think you're going to see; you know there's definitely going to be probably some shrinkage in overall HR staff.

And it's not just HR, it's Labor Relations too. We're already realizing the benefit. We have more support from OPM and we're working as a team. You know we see again a lot of benefits and I think we'll see that; you know if one agency is a little bit light and they need a bigger group to work on the labor relations matter, you're going to get that kind of support now.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you very much, and you know perhaps for the focus group we can have a one page kind of the practical application on how it's helpful. Because I'm a big supporter of the Commissioner on this initiative and I think you know centralizing all of these functions is long overdue and I'm just trying to understand what happens on it.

KATIE DYKES: If I can follow up as well. I think the way that Commissioner Geballe and Nick Hermes, the Director of HR have been approaching it has been a good, kind of transitional approach. I think that

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they're retaining sort of business partners who will continue to be embedded within the agencies, make sure that you know for all the diversity of the different programs that we implement here at DEEP, it's really helpful to have identified, sort of stable business partners who are going to continue to be our direct line of contact for HR, but at the same time, the centralization initiative also enabling DAS to create sort of centers of excellence to have -- to cultivate teams that will be able to better staff out and support a number of different HR functions that would be inefficient for each individual agency to replicate within our FTE account. So I think we've been you know, pleased with how they've been developing this so far.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Good thinking. And one quick question on EEE. There's -- I'm becoming familiar with, there's a pesticide I guess called Methoprene, am I saying that correctly, that was not allowed to be used here some years ago in Connecticut but I'm told it's being used in 49 other states. Are you looking around for somebody I should be talking to?

KATIE DYKES: I want to make sure you get the best information, Senator.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): [Laughing] That's okay. And I don't -- Senator Needleman and I we're going to have a forum to try to understand and bring some information to us about what -- what is happening here, but as I recall in the fish business years ago that was the blame for this lobster die-off that people are talking about. And that idea was prevalent at the time that it happened but seemed to

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be disproved over time and I never did get the final. So now that we've had some serious injuries and deaths increasing in southeastern Connecticut and if this is something we should consider because it attacks the mosquito and the larvae situation and not you know, spring after everybody's out flying around it's you know, hit or miss. So I'm interested in that, whether it's a possibility and you can speak to it now or we can perhaps arrange a time in the focus group to determine what you're doing with this \$302,000 and if that's a part of it.

KATIE DYKES: Well I'm happy to say at a high level, and then I can invite Rick Jacobson whose our Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Natural Resources to -- to supplement, but I think it's very important in these adjustments that the Governor is advancing the support for additional funding for our mosquito control program at a time where we aren't responding to the crisis immediately in front of us. It's very important that we have the funding for taking these actions, supporting personnel, restoring you know some of our FTE members where we've been down to only one FTE for the mosquito program; this will double the staffing, which has been higher in past years. So that's very important being able to advance support for the treatment at the larval stage.

Also very effective in helping to prevent the problem from getting bigger down the road and I think certainly having those conversations and engaging with legislatures on the types of pesticides are appropriate to use and what -- what are the consequences of their use, is something

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that's again very important for us to do in the off season so I appreciate your interest in that. And I'll have Rick fill in what I got wrong.

RICK JACOBSON: Hello, my name is Rick Jacobson. As the Commissioner indicated I'm the Bureau Chief for Natural Resources, which includes the Well and Habitat and Mosquito Management Program. Of course you didn't get anything wrong, Commissioner. [Laughing] Is there a specific question you'd like me to respond to?

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): I'm sorry. I think the question regarding the pesticide that I mentioned and is in fact true that 49 states allow it; we are the only one who does not. Is it in fact true that it has a negative effect on the Maritime population that I spoke about the lobster die-off years ago? That is what everybody blamed after they decided nuclear millstone wasn't the issue; it was something else. But I don't know if that -- I heard a study came out and disproved that. And so if that's the case, do we want to revisit that? And if we don't want to revisit that, do we have something that can attack the larvae to -- huh? Oh, I'm sorry. To stop the you know -- to stop the development and you know my interest in that is because in my district we had some deaths.

And specifically one of them was a friend of mine, so I want to make sure that you know we honor all of these folks by doing the best we can to save everybody else. And the other thing is practically we're talking about bringing everybody in at 5:00 in the afternoon and changing our world. So if we're going to be dealing with this at the larvae stage we

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almost have to be talking about it now. So I don't know if that was one question or 100, but -- [Laughing].

RICK JACOBSON: I'll do my best. We're fortunate in that we have a good size team of people here from DEEP who have a lot of background in the issue of Methoprene in particular, and so I will address those aspects that I can address and others may be able to fill in more. There's not -- Methoprene is an effective means of treating adult mosquitos and so it is an important treatment tool if we get to the point of needing to be able to respond to an outbreak of EEE or West Nile Virus. It is a commonly-used pesticide in many parts of the country. We do not have an explicit legislative prohibition on the use of Methoprene, but we do have internal restrictions on when and where we can use them. If you have specific questions about that, I think my colleague, Betsy Wingfield can address that more clearly.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): We can do that offline or at the focus groups or something. We don't have to get into all this now. I just want -- you know I see the -- and I agree with extra funding because you know lives are at stake so we've got to deal with it, but. I guess that's it.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): That's it? [Laughing]
Okay.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Unless you -- I'm sorry, unless you have anything else that you think we -- okay. So we'll deal with this in the focus group and I thank you for your attention to it.

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SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So we are going to ask for the information that Senator Formica was talking about on the EEE, what are those restrictions. We would like to have a copy of those restrictions ahead of time so that we can do our research on that. And we really want to make sure that we're making the best decision on EEE. We don't know if we're going to see an uptake again this year. It's awfully wet now. It seems to me that we can see that we're headed into a very wet year. If that happens we are -- we believe that we -- that there will be more incidents revolving around this and so I think we really want to get more information brought to the subcommittee level on EEE, what your current restrictions are, and what do we need to have legislatively to make sure that we're providing the best resources and the most safety for our eastern Connecticut residents that -- where we had tragically deaths as well as long-term injury.

KATIE DYKES: We'll be happy to provide that in followup for that subcommittee discussion.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Okay, thanks. Representative Lavielle followed by Representative Dillon.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thank you. Good afternoon, and thank you again for being here. I have just two questions and the first one is really just technical. In the -- in the environmental conservation line item where we've got a reduction of \$583,000; 200 of that appears to be the transfer to the hatchery, but what's the rest of it? How do we bundle that into that line item?

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DENNIS THIBODEAU: The rest of them are -- they're positioned so those are -- a portion of those seven positions move into the Passport to Parks. So the remainder is positions and salaries for those positions.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Okay, thank you. So that's easy. The second one, just a question about PFOS. I know that the -- this is -- what we're funding here has a lot to do with the task force recommendations and so forth. It's a really complicated problem because of the -- all the novelty and measurement and things like that and still some of the unknowns. I'm just curious that you know, if you read this it talks -- and if you read the task force report it talks a lot about you know, finding it, identifying it, get it out of where it was, make sure drinking water is clean, which is all very, very important. But what -- is there anything -- any additional work being done any of this funding allocated to actually disposing of it? And if we find excess, if towns have some excess PFOS or if we're using water filters and it's being taken out of the water. There are -- I understand that some other states have had some problems with burning and so on. Where are we in that process, and are we funding it at all?

KATIE DYKES: So certainly appreciate the -- that's a very important part of our PFOS response is making sure that our strategies for disposal are ending the problem and not transferring the contamination to another part of our system. I'll just point to, for example with respect to the -- the firefighting foam, which we know has high concentrations of this

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-- these chemicals in it. We are supporting through the Bond Fund a takeback program, and part of what those funds would be used for is for funding the proper disposal of the firefighting foam.

There are a number of different options that are available. We have been in dialogue with other states as well. That's been one of the benefits, but the silver lining of states having to take the leadership on addressing PFOS is having close coordination and sharing the best practices with respect to. For example, incineration -- adequate incineration temperatures for -- for PFOS to fully destroy these very durable chemicals, or whether disposal in proper specified landfills is something that can be done safely. But I'm happy to invite as well our Deputy -- I'm just looking --

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): It may be something that you can give more to us on in the subcommittee. I don't want to take up too much time. But I just did want to -- indifference to you, but I just wanted to raise the issue because I think it's -- you know I'd like to just know what the -- to what measure our funding is being allocated to that as well because that stuff is more alarming than what people thought for quite a long time, and we still don't know a lot about it.

KATIE DYKES: Yeah, I appreciate that, Representative. We're happy to bring some more information to the working group process.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): That'd be great, thank you very much.

KATIE DYKES: Thank you for the question.

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SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Representative Dillon.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Good afternoon. Thank you very much, Commissioner. I was surprised to hear that Methoprene isn't banned; I thought it was. And that we actually exempted the city of New Haven from that ban because there had been a death from West Nile Virus of the mother of a friend of mine who lives a block from the West River, which will open the door to another line of questioning. But that -- we were quite anxious that banning based on inadequate science would remove a tool from our tool box because it was an area that was -- we were very, very concerned about the -- the way that the salt marshes and catch basins were really filled with those, well the skunks but also with insects that could be carrying West Nile Virus. So for that reason I'm really looking forward to a discussion of the Methoprene.

And I couldn't congratulate the administration more the initiative on EEE. I -- we've discussed this amongst ourselves and it had been my understanding that the vitality rate was 50 percent. People are telling me it's lower, but because most of the people that get it are generally in good health and would have no reason to suspect it may delay actually getting some treatment. So, we should have known this -- you know in the horse fight that this was coming, that was a signal event, but it's really important public health initiative and I really congratulate you and the Governor and the other departments for the work that's going to be done. It's very important.

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The West River question on whether or not the dollars had gotten out the door, this came up in another department where dollars had still not been released from February that were -- that were directed in the budget and it was an ongoing appropriation. This may be an OPM question but I'm concerned that -- I remember seeing a document where there were recommended revisions from the Secretary of OPM on unspent dollars in different departments. If you haven't gotten the money out the door yet because someone is still talking to the agency, which has been funded before; if they haven't actually gotten the money in hand, is that considered unspent by you or by OPM when they go to make residence.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Yeah, well you're right. So if the funds aren't drawn out, they're unspent and that would be available for residence. We usually wait for -- there's a request letter that would come for the West River ear -- I'll call it an earmark designation but we haven't seen anything. We've reached out a couple times and typically we get it near the end of the year, so if we could accelerate that I think you know, we'd release the money now. We have the funds available, it's in our OE account, so we'd be happy to work with them.

REP. DILLON (92ND): I can't speak for the situation because I haven't discussed it with them but I know this came up with another group in another department where it was -- there was constant communication and it was something that had been funded before the dollars were released, and I started thinking well, you know if the

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administration can claim their unspent after there have been 14 emails back and forth, does that mean that the little guys are at risk. And it would be very helpful if we could get clarify on that. And I don't know the situation with West River Watershed, but there's a lot of activity around the West River, so.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you. I want to ask about what -- first I want to go on to West River. I think that they had submitted a letter 'cause I have a copy; they sent me a copy of the letter, and that was submitted to you guys in November, so I'll try and pull that out. But I will contact them if Representative Dillon doesn't and let them know we need to know. And we'll ask for a copy of the communications so that we know about the communication also.

The weatherization projects, are you guys still doing them?

KATIE DYKES: Let me invite our Deputy Commissioner for Energy, Vickie Hackett who will provide some information about that.

REP. WALKER (93RD): You would have been disappointed if I hadn't brought this up, right? [Laughing] Thank you.

VICKIE HACKETT: I'm Vickie Hackett, Deputy Commissioner of Energy. So yes, I believe that we've been working with the Clerk to try and set up a meeting that we promised you all, so we're in the midst of putting together a report for you and we'd love to get that scheduled and did in further in this. So my understanding right now is that we're

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ahead of where our spending was last year. The biggest thing that we did after, I think maybe it was my second day on the job and our Bureau Chief had just started about two weeks before when we all met on this in August, and we have -- we spent the next few months after that trying to identify like what are the road blocks to fully spending the allocation for this. And I think we identified several things that we could do to make the process more efficient, to ensure that the community action agencies were getting the training and support that they needed and that the -- sort of the recording mechanisms were more understandable and easy to follow and more helpful to them.

And we also have brought on NOI as an additional community action agency with help with the weatherization program. So we now have two community action agencies under contract for the program. So I know --

REP. WALKER (93RD): Who are the two agencies?

VICKIE HACKETT: CRT and NOY. So NOY was brought on, I believe the contract was signed December 31 and we've been spending a lot of time with them on training and helping them launch. We've also --

REP. WALKER (93RD): So, NOT is where? It's Waterbury isn't it? No.

VICKIE HACKETT: NOY is Waterbury.

REP. WALKER (93RD): I mean NOY is Waterbury. And the other was CRT, which is Hartford.

VICKIE HACKETT: I should --

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REP. WALKER (93RD): Yes.

VICKIE HACKETT: -- know the answer to that, but yes.

REP. WALKER (93RD): I'll answer it for you. So we've got Waterbury and we've got Hartford.

VICKIE HACKETT: But they're covering the whole state and we now -- one of the improvements that we've made is that we're breaking the state down by zones and we're having them record where they're doing their services by zone, so that we can make sure that the services are being provided on an equitable manner across the state. So that is one of the --

REP. WALKER (93RD): So we would like to see where those monies are going. We'd like to see how long payments are taking to be processed.

VICKIE HACKETT: Yep.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Then we'll go from there.

VICKIE HACKETT: Okay. And then, um, yes.

REP. WALKER (93RD): How much money do we usually have annually for weatherization?

VICKIE HACKETT: I don't have the number in --

REP. WALKER (93RD): Somebody has it.

VICKIE HACKETT: Over \$2 million.

REP. WALKER (93RD): And this is -- this is from our CDBG money, right? Not CDBG, what do they call it, um, yeah, yeah, the federal dollars.

VICKIE HACKETT: Yes, it's federal money.

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REP. WALKER (93RD): So it's over \$2 million? Okay. So you'll provide us with the last years' payments and how long it took for them to get paid out.

VICKIE HACKETT: Yes, we will do that.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you. Okay. My next quest -- I've got more questions. Don't be trigger happy, I've been quiet. [Laughing] Next question is on the -- the emergency spill. You have \$301 that are being taken out of there and according to the writeup it says to achieve savings. So I guess what I'd like to know is, other than emergency spills there are \$301, how did you determine that this was excess?

KATIE DYKES: Sure, so we did it -- let me just pull my notes here. For the Spills Response Program of course there can be fluctuations in the amount of balance that we're carrying there as we address spills, which are not predictable. But what we did here, there's -- the average expenditures in this account for the last five years is about \$439,000 in realized expenses. So this reduction aligns that budget reserve with the average five-year costs.

And we of course have been making a lot of progress. I want to highlight, improving our spills collection and the assignment of costs for spill response to responsible parties, and that's with the assistance of the Attorney General's office.

REP. WALKER (93RD): They helped you?

KATIE DYKES: Pardon?

REP. WALKER (93RD): They helped you?

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KATIE DYKES: In terms of pursuit of responsible parties who ultimately need to reimburse the cost for the spill response.

REP. WALKER (93RD): To get the money back, yeah, okay. [Laughing] I was like, they helped in the spills? [Laughing]

KATIE DYKES: We have great partnership with our constitutional offices.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Attorney General Tong has talents but -- [Laughing]. Okay. And going onto the -- the West River Watershed. [Laughing] Pat. So I guess my concern is, this is a -- a river that connects New Haven to Woodbridge to -- it goes all the way up through that channel right there so the -- the money that's there was to dredge -- open up the canals and the dams and to create a better waterway, especially for our migrating -- what are those fish? There's a fish that goes up there. I forgot. Yeah, it's a fish. [Laughing] I saw them.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: The river herring.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: I know nothing about fish. [Laughing] I got a little help here.

REP. WALKER (93RD): I knew it was a herring and I knew it was a kind of herring, but I could remember whether it was a white herring or what, river herring. Okay. Anyhow, those -- the work that goes on with that really does help in that community going all the way up because in the past what has happened is the clogging and everything causes flooding into the communities there. We've had some

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dramatic flooding problems until we started putting money into this West River.

So this is not excess. This is not something left over. This is not something that is not needed because the amount of money that had to be paid out in those areas because of flooding and things backing up in the dams was far more -- far more than \$100,000. This is -- this is maintenance to make sure that we don't get sued and other things, so I think we need to look -- re-look at this, okay?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: Absolutely.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you. We're done, I'm done.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Representative Dathan followed by representative Horn.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Thank you very much, Madam Chair and thank you for your presentation today. I have a million questions but I'm going to try to limit it to a couple. First was following from my colleague's, Representative Lavielle's question, I noticed a lot of states around the country have different regulation amounts for acceptable amounts. Ours is 70 parts per trillion. I know that part of this budget is looking at increasing -- or looking at that level to see what's the most acceptable level. You know I'm just kind of curious how that process is going to go, and if you're just going to say, well Massachusetts's has 30 or whatever it is, Vermont has 20, California has point-nil; how are we going to look at it?

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KATIE DYKES: Well of course, I know that that is something that falls really within DPH's, Department of Public Health's jurisdiction and expertise is the -- they I know are looking to establish a safe drinking water advisory council so engaging in a public engagement process with experts to make sure that we have science-based standards that we're developing and I think that that's the intent of the budget adjustment support, DPH's budget to ensure that they're able to bring on consultant services to facilitate that process that ensure a really deliberative process that can look at what the appropriate standards are for Connecticut.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): So the \$354 is just for then the current ground water checking around the state?

KATIE DYKES: Right. So within DEEP's budget and DEEP's jurisdictional role there's \$354,000 line item that will be used to initiate a study to assess the extent and degree of PFOS in our surface work and sediments. And so you know it's very important to Representative Lavielle's earlier comments and question, this is a very pervious family of chemicals. They've been in use since the 1940s and they're very persistent and they have impacts on public health and so as we contemplate how to prioritize our response it's important for us to first start with any understanding of the background levels of PFOS in our environment and that's what this funding for the sampling will enable us to do so we can have a really strategic approach to mediating and cleaning up this chemical.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): So none of this amount would go to municipalities that are incurring costs. I

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know the first taxing district in Norwalk is experiencing extra costs as a result for all the testing. They've had to shut down some of their sources, a result of the PFOS elevated levels, and so they're experiencing it, which is again, these costs are getting then -- will have to go to the taxpayer some way or another. Is there any view that the state should help these local taxing districts, water districts to ensure that they can help pay for some of the testing that needs to happen?

KATIE DYKES: Well one thing that we are looking to do, not specific to the testing but to the take-back program for the AFFF, for the firefighting foam where we know that there's an interest in transition, although it's very important to transition to fluorine free foams to ensure emergency response is not producing more contamination. In the bond package we know that the Governor is supporting \$2 million to support the buy back of PFOS foam from municipalities and the disposal costs there. So I think that's really an important thing that will help to alleviate some of the cost burden for municipalities beginning to address PFOS contamination.

DENNIS THIBODEAU: And I should mention drinking water program, DWSRF has the ability for some of those costs so as they continue, that would be an opportunity.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Can you repeat that for me?

DENNIS THIBODEAU: It's -- DPH has a drinking water program, DWSRF, which this would -- it's the

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revolving loan program which would have some eligibility for these types of costs. So there may be some opportunity there as well.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Okay. My next question has to do a little bit with the mosquito spraying. We have a great initiative in Norwalk and New Cannon where I represent for the Pollinator Pathways. I'm sure you've come across it somehow. Are we conscientious of programs like this with all of our spraying for mosquitos and other tick-born elements?

RICK JACOBSON: Hi, Rick Jacobson again. Yes, we're certainly aware of the pollinator programs through the state. In fact we're big advocates for advancing pollinator programs to the greatest degree practical. The additional \$302,088 for expanding our existing wildlife -- or wetland habitat and mosquito management program is specifically targeted at those areas for which we have the elevated risk for EEE and West Nile Virus, most specifically southeastern Connecticut and southcentral Connecticut. Those monies are really split between three different categories. The first category is on personnel expenses; that's the \$52,088 for a wetland specialist.

Among the things that that person will be doing is monitoring and control for larval in adult mosquitos and for proving technical assistance to the municipalities to make certain their targeted activities don't do things like create implications for our pollinator programs across the state.

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When we look at the second tier, which is our operational category expenditure under that expansion, it's really focused on operations so that's a combination of seasonal employees during the summer for monitoring and targeted application, for acquiring some product, etc., and for contractor services. Again, focus specifically on those Red Maple swamps where the male inviting mosquitoes are particularly service breeding pools that create the real vector between birds and humans in particular. And those are not areas for which we have pollinator issues 'cause they're wetland habitats themselves.

And then it's the third category where we're actually in to outbreak response measures and again, those are targeted at the specific wetland complexes where we have an emergence of Mammalian-biting mosquitoes. It's not focused on those areas where we've got the pollinator programs in place.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Got it. I actually had a constituent write to me and ask if DOT would consider not mowing along the motorways to encourage pollinator pathways and would love to hear your opinion on this just anecdotally so I can have a good response to them.

KATIE DYKES: Anecdotally, Commissioner Gillette sent over a sign to my office for his pollinator program. I know he's been expanding it and you can see some of the signage that they've been doing, a no-mow policy in many of the median areas and things that DOT controls, again to support pollinator habitat so I was pleased to get that gift from the Commissioner.

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REP. DATHAN (142ND): I'll let the constituent know. My very last question is around the Killingly power plant. Is there any involvement for state employees in that power plant within DEEP to make sure that if and when that re-opens that we are environmentally doing the best thing we can to minimize any issues that we have? I mean I'm not supporting this Killingly power plant. I've written to the Governor, but I would just like to know because this is an important thing for a lot of the young people in my district who are vocal about that, and I just want to make sure that as taxpayers that we are going -- moving to clean energy but would like to get an idea if there is anything within your department that is going to support that initiative.

KATIE DYKES: So if I'm understanding the question correctly, you're asking whether we have any employees who are --

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Like a head count or any monies going to -- that would be supporting the power plant in any sort of way, monitoring it.

KATIE DYKES: So we have obviously responsibilities under our Environmental Quality Branch to review any permits that are associated in our delegate authority for the EAP, under the Clean Water Act to consider any applications that we receive from any power generator or a project that impacts wetlands or -- and we've been undertaking those different permitting processes. Some are complete and some are still pending.

With respect to the project itself, we know there's been a great deal of public interest as well as

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legislative interest in that facility. The Governor you know has indicated continuing to assess the project and so there's nothing to report there specifically. But you know the project was selected by the ice in New England through its forward capacity market, the Connecticut DEEP or the electric utilities here in the state are -- did not contract for this project. This is one that is being built and funded through the ice in New England for the benefit of the New England region. And -- but with that said, with respect to the interest in transitioning to clean energy which we've been hearing and pleased to see so many youth really engaging in that as a priority policy and calling for leadership on that.

The Governor has advanced Senate Bill 10, which would codify in statute a goal that he called for by executive order to transition to a 100 percent 0 carbon electric grid by 2040. And -- and certainly we're hopeful that we'll be able to advance that as a foundation to ensure this orderly transition.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Thank you so much. I appreciate your testimony today and all the work that you guys do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. And before I turn it over to Senator Hartley; have you had any complaints about renewable energy projects that are happening in certain parts of the state?

KATIE DYKES: Well we certainly have many different roles that we plan within our department, whether it's on the energy branch supporting CARF design and contract mechanisms for deployment of renewables and

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on our environment quality and conservation side, ensuring that we're properly implementing all of our environmental review and permitting processes. So I think the --

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So the answer would be yes. [Laughing] I think that you need to get to the point on that one.

KATIE DYKES: Yes.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): The answer would be yes is there are just as many people who complain about renewable energy and it appears to me that are taking advantage of some of the policies that have been instituted on that metering to have the projects of solar being put on the eastern side of the state and benefiting, metering on the western side of the state. In particular, solar projects in Franklin and Lebanon who get absolutely not one dollar of benefit and not one iota of energy going to either Lebanon or Franklin yet they have the projects in there because the other towns on the other side of the state, in particular the town of Wilton, and they don't want to have solar projects in their communities because they don't like the way they look.

And so I think that we're going to end up with the same program as we continue to move forward even though we want renewable energy; we don't want the projects in our backyards. And I know -- I know that for a fact. When we put in a 20 megawatt system in Sprague, the people that were in that neighborhood made such a complaint about it even though it provided the town with \$200,000 in

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revenue, did not want it there. And still fight renewable energy projects across eastern Connecticut. So I think that when we talk about energy and renewable energy that people should also know that there is a significant population of people that are not interested in solar projects anywhere near where they would happen to see them. So I think it's far more complicated than to say we want renewable energy projects. Because the Governor can put that out, but when you go to put a 20 megawatt facility on some open space area in Connecticut, you are going to get complaints by the people that live around there. They don't want to see it.

I just -- you know I think we're not being honest with ourselves that you know -- I can foresee -- I like the wind projects. I can foresee the same complaints coming up from people that traverse by windmill areas saying we don't really want to see this. We're used to when we drive by or when we're sailing we're used to seeing open ocean. It think the same thing happened when we put up telephone poles that people did not want to see telephone poles back in the day and now they're a matter of our -- the character of everything that we do. So I just -- you know when we talk about this issue, it's just so much more complicated, it really is. And I hear all the time that we're going to go to solar, we're going to put them up and down the medians and the highways and we're going to be able to do all of this.

People don't want to see them. They're not pretty to look at unless you can figure out a way to paint

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them with a few flowers on them, but I really do think that we -- and I'm not opposed to renewable energy. I fought to put large projects in, but I also know that there's a huge fight out there amongst other areas and people tell me they want to see it on an agricultural -- on prime, important farmland. But if a farmer can't afford to keep his land and it's going to be a solar project or 56 homes I don't -- I think that the answer's much more complicated than that. You know if we're not giving the farmer any way to be successful, they actually have to make money, but if we're not giving them any way to be successful.

You know you can say you don't want it on prime and important farmland. If he sells his property to a developer it's going get built on. So, I do appreciate Representative Dathan's conversation on the Killingly Power Plant; I'm just pointing out that there's just as many people that don't want to see large solar projects. There's not enough rooftops in Connecticut to put solar on to handle the -- what we need and we haven't yet figured out battery -- batteries well enough to hold onto that power and use them when there's 10 days of no sun.

KATIE DYKES: Well there's a lot and I don't want to -- I appreciate, Senator your views on this and certainly you've lived close to it with the development of the 20 megawatt project that you mentioned, which was one of the first to be procured by the state through our RFP process. I just want to underscore that you know a transition to 100 percent 0 carbon electric grid is not something we would do exclusively through solar. We in fact you

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mentioned batteries. I think it's really important to point out that in the same Senate Bill 10, we are seeking legislative authorization for DEEP to conduct procurements for storage because we have seen the prices for that resource come down precipitously that helps us to ensure that with the installation of storage technologies that we can achieve reductions and optimize use of the solar that we're building out.

We've had great successes with the development of offshore wind, with the support bipartisan of the last year 2000 megawatts of offshore wind were able to procure very significant quantities of that resource again through a commissioned process that helped us incorporate sensitivities around environmental concerns, but the quantities that you can procure the resource like that, just the announcement of 800 megawatts last December equivalent to 14 percent of the Connecticut energy load. And of course today we are pleased to appreciate some milestones on the 300 megawatts previously contracted with Revolution Wind, another 5 percent of energy load.

And finally I'll say --

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): But on that -- on that 300 in New London, there are a significant number of people that live in the -- in the district that I am in and that Senator Formica's in that are not happy about that agreement that was signed. They actually -- we had people that protested that today. One person was arrested today at the CPA meeting. So I just want to -- I want us to understand that this is not

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as simple as saying we want to have renewable energy; that it's very complicated.

And we have in our area of the state seen that increase but not -- and I'm -- and I'm for the renewable energy components, whether it's solar or wind or a new technology that we don't yet have. I agree that we have to do something. But just because the land values are cheaper in eastern Connecticut does not mean that we get every solar project that's in and the people in eastern Connecticut get absolutely no benefit because of loopholes that have been put into net metering. If it's under 1 megawatt, even though it's all on one site, the town of Lebanon is getting not one dollar of tax benefit for having it in their area and not one kilowatt of energy in that area. So they get the project along their roadsides, but they get no benefit for it. The benefit is on the western side of the state and the dollars go to the developer, but not to the town that was promised it.

And last year I had a Bill in on that and this year I have a Bill in on that that corrects that wrong, but why would they want to support more solar in an area that has low land values if they get no benefit for it.

KATIE DYKES: Well, and I certainly would be delighted to follow up offline with you, Senator on some of the opportunities with respect to property tax exemptions and so on for the solar industry.

I just also wanted to point out that in addition to seeking authority to procure storage there's another resource out there that has been around for decades

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that can help -- that is going to be essential for us to make a transition to 100 percent 0 carbon electric grid, and it doesn't have siting issues which is energy efficiency. Because the more that we can advance investment and things it helps to insulate homes, help to improve the efficiency of our appliances. It helps to avoid the amount of generation that we need to build out and address some of those complicated issues around siting and so we're really excited again in that Bill to be seeking that authority so we can scale investment in the energy that you don't see and you don't use, which is -- provides great benefit to all of us.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): And I have constituents that can't take advantage of those energy efficiencies because they owe too much money on their house and they just can't -- they're not allowed to participate in this program. So I just think that you know, I like all of these things. A I think they're great, but it's clear to me that it depends on where you live whether you benefit for some of these, and some very poor people who live on the edge, either make a little bit too much or have too much debt to participate in some of the programs that we have. And I -- you know, I think that that's something that -- that we should recognize out loud, that there's a problem with how we're putting this out and that a certain part of the state is having more of the solar projects built in it 'cause our land values are cheaper and they get no benefit for it. And I'd be happy to talk to you offline about it.

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I would like to see us working on anaerobic digesters and get some of those projects started, which will help out agriculture. And you know I don't see that happening very quickly. I think that that -- it was brought up at the Rural Caucus and we are concerned that it's taking so long for us to get to that point, so that's another methodology that we could actually use in -- in eastern Connecticut that would -- that would drive down the costs for farmers, keep them on their land. Does it impact prime and important farmland and certainly taking far too long for us to get moving on for a variety of reasons.

KATIE DYKES: Well Senator, we had a technical meeting on anaerobic digestion at DEEP weeks ago. We're really excited to see members of the agriculture communities, farmers as well as developers of anaerobic digestion participating in that technical meeting. We were having a dialogue about things that DEEP could undertake to help accelerate the climate of anaerobic digestion. I know we're looking to work with the Energy and Technology Committee as well on some concepts that could help accelerate that as a broader solution, not just for meeting our carbon goals, but also for addressing our municipal solid waste challenges and ensure that we have adequate infrastructures there. I really am grateful for all of your interest in all of these topics and while I respect all of your views; I may not agree with every point that you've mentioned, but I think it signals how important it is for us to have leaders like yourself with DEEP experience on these issues and your community in

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this discussion with us about how we can reach our goals.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): And we put it out to the rural community that you were having that meeting, because many of them did not know about the meeting on anaerobic digesters. We made sure that both the Farm Bureau and the Rural Committee Caucus and a few other organizations were told about it so that they could put their voices out there on anaerobic digesters which is a way that we could benefit that portion. But it's not as easy at the rhetoric that people are out there talking, that we're going to make it easy to get to renewable energy and not understand the complications, and not understand the financial commitment that some of our open spaces are making to keep that there. So Senator Hartley, you're up next.

SENATOR HARTLEY (15TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Am I the last person, because I know we're a little bit overdue here so that means I have to just talk fast and also I'll give you punch list? First of all, let me say thank you, Commissioner and staff for your leadership of a very, very crucial agency in the overall state of Connecticut quality of life, health and so many other things, energy and so forth. But let me just ask you, if you can come back to us; because this is about appropriations, tell me or cost out what it would mean if we identified folks on the Passport to Parks who have more than one automobile. They can only go to the park once. They've got four automobiles. They feel like they're getting hit three extra times.

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Seniors also feel like they already had the ability to go to the park and now they -- they're paying through the Passport to Parks. So I want to see what those numbers would mean, what -- how much would that be, a diminution of the fund in terms of you know what we're banking on here. I see we keep moving personnel over and so forth.

Then I would like to ask and commend you first all about the 20 by 20 initiative and I know it's just been rolled out and announced, but I would like to know how that translates to efficiencies and numbers in the department. What -- what efficiencies are you hoping to realize with those -- that plan, those changes.

And then I guess I need to be convinced about the most recent policy change, which I'm not sure if it's 20 by 20 or whatever, which came out with regard to, you won't be surprised to hear me say this, the LEPs in changing, effective March 3rd that there will be no more insufficiency notices and that they -- there will only be administrative rejection. I need to understand and appreciate what that's going to accomplish and then why we would then be posting a public list of administrative rejections when this in fact is the livelihood of those professional people that translates to -- for my own perspective, who I'm going to hire. It's kind of like you go on the website, consumer protection, you check the doctors and anybody who has all these complaints, and you don't go there. Why would you go to an LEP that has gotten all of these administrative dismissals?

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So we're trying to change this culture and this conversation so if you can summarize that for me I would be very interested and then I will leave you with one last thing and that is about the charging stations. So you know, all these folks in the industry are saying that EVs and autonomous vehicles are not that far away despite the fact of what we think. I know we've been talking a long time for example about getting a charging station at the Waterbury train station, still not there. I would like a summary of your charging stations, the policy and how you are going to compete with now you know, every manufacturer is putting out electric vehicles and price points are changing. It's really all about where those charging stations are. How do we compare to our neighbors on that as part of your whole carbon conversation?

So thank you. Did I make it within the time?
[Laughing]

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. And thank you, thank you very much for your testimony and having this conversation. Maybe we should have more coffee and talk about things more, or a drink, whichever you want. Anyhow, thank you and we will talk to you soon. We look forward to getting the information from you and seeing you at the smaller discussions. Thank you.

KATIE DYKES: Appreciate the opportunity, thank you.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): At this time this concludes the agency portion of today and don't ask me what all the agencies were, but there were a lot of them. But we will -- we will reconvene at 5:00 for the

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public portion and I recommend to all the dignitaries and heads of agencies and everything, it would be nice for your to listen to some of the testimony that people bring to us about your agencies because it helps you to understand why we ask you the same questions, so this is important for us and for you. So thank you, and have a great afternoon.