

Public Hearing – February 19, 2021
Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Katie S. Dykes

House Bill 5419 – An Act Concerning the Federal Clean Air Act Fee on Motor Vehicle Registrations

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) appreciates the opportunity to testify on House Bill 5419 – An Act Concerning the Federal Clean Air Act Fee on Motor Vehicle Registrations. DEEP opposes this bill, which would divert unspecified levels of revenue from the federal Clean Air Act fee.

Established in 1993, portions of the “federal Clean Air Act fee” are used to support clean air programs, strategies and initiatives which are critical to address Connecticut’s air quality challenges, and to protect public health and the environment. Connecticut fails to meet the national ambient air quality standards for ozone,¹ and every day we exceed these standards represents very real and very tangible adverse health impacts. The transportation sector is responsible for approximately 70 percent of smog forming air pollution and 38 percent of greenhouse gas pollution in Connecticut. Poor air quality exacerbates acute and chronic respiratory problems such as asthma, and cities such as New Haven and Hartford rank in the top 20 of the 100 largest U.S. cities where it is most challenging to live with asthma.

More than half of the fees collected under this provision are now directed to the Special Transportation Fund,² which supports critical transportation needs and ongoing efforts by the Department of Motor Vehicles to ensure motor vehicles meet in-use emission standards through the inspection and maintenance program.

DEEP strongly supports new investments in green transportation infrastructure and believes **Senate Bill 884, An Act Reducing Transportation Related Carbon Emissions**,³ will provide this much needed revenue. DEEP cannot support diverting existing revenue from critical clean air and mobile source control programs which are designed in part to also address the inequities caused by exposure to poor air quality for our most vulnerable populations.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact James Albis at James.Albis@ct.gov.

¹ Connecticut is currently classified severe nonattainment for the 2008 ozone standard and within the next two years the three counties in southwest Connecticut (Fairfield, Middlesex and New Haven) will likely be reclassified as severe nonattainment. The entire state currently fails to attain the 2015 ozone standard with the three counties in southwest Connecticut classified moderate nonattainment and the remainder of the state classified marginal nonattainment. It is likely that Connecticut will not attain the 2015 standards – also leading to more stringent reclassifications in the near future.

² See Conn. Gen. Stat. section 14-49b(a)

³ See www.cga.ct.gov/2021/TOB/S/PDF/2021SB-00884-R00-SB.PDF