

Senator Christopher Murphy
Legislative Office Building
Room 3000
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

January 18, 2005

Dear Senator Murphy,

PEER is a Washington D.C.-based non-profit, non-partisan public interest organization concerned with honest and open government. Specifically, PEER serves and protects public employees working on environmental issues. PEER represents thousands of local, state and federal government employees nationwide; our New England chapter is located outside of Boston, Massachusetts. We have numerous members in Connecticut.

PEER is writing to you to express our deep concerns over the appointment of Gina McCarthy as the new Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner in Connecticut. Ms. McCarthy has been a long-time top environmental official in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Prior to Governor Mitt Romney's election in January 2003, she was the Undersecretary of Policy at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), the comprehensive state agency that includes the Departments of Environmental Protection, Agricultural Resources, Conservation and Recreation (parks), and Fish and Wildlife. Under Governor Romney's Administration, Ms. McCarthy was appointed as Deputy Secretary for Operations in the Massachusetts Office for Commonwealth Development (OCD). She has held this position since May of 2003, and she is in charge of directing policy and program coordination for the state agencies responsible for the environment, transportation, housing and energy.

We are concerned that the worst traits of the environmental programs in Massachusetts for which Ms. McCarthy was responsible will be imported to Connecticut should Ms. McCarthy be approved as Commissioner of DEP. At the very least, PEER believes that Ms. McCarthy should explain her role in or support for a Massachusetts record that:

- Evades enforcement of anti-pollution laws to the detriment of public health;
- Subverts protection of wildlife and habitat to facilitate unwise development schemes; and
- Suppresses the work of professional staff through gag orders, union busting, and retaliatory re-organizations.

In the following attachment, PEER outlines how the Massachusetts programs have negatively affected our air, waters and undeveloped lands. We urge you to ask Ms. McCarthy pointed questions about her agreement or disagreement with these policies.

Finally, PEER is concerned that the decision to retain the deputy directors of Connecticut DEP will simply extend the abuses of the Rowland-Rocque era. We therefore urge you to staff the upper management of DEP with employees who were not complicit in the scandal.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Kyla Bennett, Director
New England PEER