



***Council of the District of Columbia, Committee on Transportation & the Environment,
Budget Oversight Hearing: District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE)***

April 12, 2016, 11:00 AM

John A Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 120

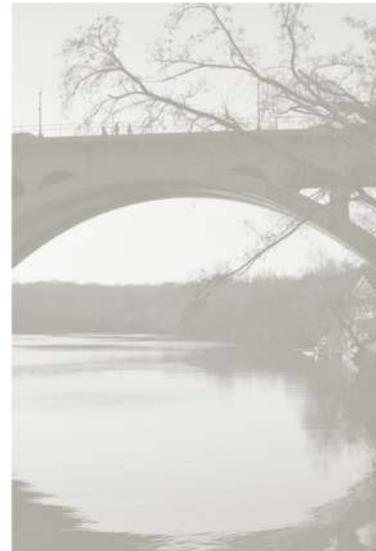
***Testimony of Chris Weiss, Executive Director, DC Environmental Network (DCEN),
Director, Washington, DC Office, Global Green USA (U.S. Affiliate, Green Cross International)***

Good morning Chairperson Cheh and other Councilmembers and staff.

I am Chris Weiss and I am the Executive Director of the District of Columbia Environmental Network (DCEN), and Director of the Washington DC Office for Global Green USA.

Spearheaded by Global Green USA, the DC Environmental Network (DCEN), founded in 1996 — is working toward a vision of rebuilding Washington, DC's neighborhoods and communities for long-term economic stability — accomplishing this by protecting and restoring the Capital City's urban environment. DCEN is spearheaded by Global Green USA, U.S. affiliate of Green Cross International.

The mission of Global Green USA is to foster a global value shift toward a sustainable and secure future. Global Green is a national leader in advancing sustainable and resilient communities. We green cities, schools, and affordable housing to help protect human health, improve livability, and support our planet's natural systems in an effort to stem climate change.



Thank you for holding this important budget oversight hearing focused on the District Department of Energy and Environment. In preparation for your hearing, and to help educate sustainability organizations and advocates about the budget process and Mayor Bowser's budget priorities, DCEN and the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, in coordination with DOEE, organized a special budget briefing at the offices of the District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE).

Much thanks to DOEE Director Wells and staff, for promoting transparency, and doing a great job of sharing the design and focus of the Mayor's budget.

Participants included representatives from DCEN, DCFPI, Institute for Market Transformation, AOBA, City Wildlife, Grid Alternatives, Just Electric Transportation, Sierra Club – DC Chapter, DC SEU, Alice Ferguson Foundation, Institute for Local Self Reliance, DC Greens, Empower DC and other sustainability advocates.

Join the DC ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK, DC FISCAL POLICY INSTITUTE & DOEE for a
DC DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT
FY17 BUDGET BRIEFING
MONDAY, APRIL 4TH @ 5:30 PM @ 1200 FIRST ST, NE, 5th FLOOR

This process helped us develop a number of preliminary principles that we hope will guide your committee’s questions and actions, as you go through the rest of your budget process. Some of these focuses include (partial):

- **FUND WILDLIFE REHAB SERVICES & ID A MORE PERMANENT FUNDING STREAM:** Making sure District residents have access to wildlife rehabilitation services is important to becoming a humane, sustainable city. Historically the Department of Health, and now, DOEE, have funded programs to rehabilitate wildlife, something DCEN and many others, support strongly. We believe Mayor Bowser has committed to continue funding wildlife rehab in the District, although it again, much like a year ago, FEELS LIKE the funding stream needs to be more institutionalized, more permanent, and be a clear, firm commitment by the District to this important humane wildlife program.



- **FUND NEEDS OF WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT:** The new regulations of this act may finally be issued shortly and will include infrastructure, permitting, testing, and reporting along with overseeing wildlife control activities in the District. Making sure appropriate funds are set aside for the humane components of this act should be a focus of your committee.
- **MAXIMIZE DOEE BENEFITS TO LOW-INCOME DISTRICT RESIDENTS:** Sustainability should be for everyone. Whether its programs to increase low-income access to affordable, renewable, energy, or trying to figure out how to maximize the benefits of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance (or LIHEAP) program, we urge your committee, to strengthen these programs during a time when many District residents are finding it hard to pay bills, and meet basic needs, in this expensive city, and need our help.
- **MAKE SURE RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAMS ARE ADEQUATELY FUNDED:** The District has spent much of the last decade developing strategies and plans to help make our rivers fishable

and swimmable. Making sure the District's stormwater administration has the funds necessary to implement important initiatives, such as the stormwater TMDL plan, can help facilitate a more efficient implementation schedule. With careful planning and adequate funding, the District can avoid, for example, keeping to the proposed 130+ year implementation schedule to achieve water quality standards in the waters that wind through our communities.

- **SUPPORT DOEE EFFORTS TO FINISH THE COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY PLAN:** Many in the sustainability community are eagerly awaiting the release of the Districts Comprehensive Energy Plan. Make sure DOEE has the funding and incentives necessary to get the job done.

After today's hearing, if necessary, we will be convening to develop a few focused budget priorities for DOEE and/or express support for recommendations of the committee.

The most efficient way to move important sustainability initiatives forward is for both the Executive and Legislative branch, and advocacy community, to use their unique perspectives, responsibilities, and capabilities, to strengthen District efforts to achieve shared goals.

DOEE, which was created from the efforts of the advocacy community, has evolved, grown in size, and been strengthened by the Executive Branch, and nurtured and challenged to do more, by the legislative branch. The end result is an agency that has established itself as a leader on a number of fronts. A successful budget process will mean the continuance of this positive forward momentum.

Thank you.