



FISHERIES ADVISORY COUNCIL - A group of dedicated citizens from all regions of the state working together for fish and fishing in Connecticut.

February 18, 2009

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Testimony of Dr. Vincent P. Ringrose, Chairman, DEP FISHERIES ADVISORY COUNCIL.

Re: *RAISED BILL* HB6371

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and members of the Environmental Committee:

The Fisheries Advisory Council (FAC) represents 31 organizations working together on behalf of fish and fishing in the State of Connecticut. The FAC also serves as an advisory council to the DEP. We would like to address two issues included in HB6371.

The first issue is the doubling of all license fees. While the sportsman of the state have always been willing to accept a REASONABLE increase in times of need, the proposed doubling far exceeds reasonable. Plus, it flies in the face of the Governor's backing of the "NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE" program. Many families pay for the licenses of their still-at-home youngsters who need legal licenses. Too large an increase will reduce participation by attrition, and in this time of need, many families may well want to fish more aggressively for the table.

Secondly, fees must remain in the Conservation Fund. The DEP will have its hands tied in managing its financial affairs if the FEES FUND is abolished. The Marine and All-Waters licenses appear in the new budget, but they should be created in the form and with the fee structure proposed at the beginning of last year's session, and its revenue should also come to the Conservation Fund. Otherwise, sportsmen will not be able to support its passage, as much as it is needed to keep registry fees out of federal hands.

Thank you.