

Public hearing date: February 13, 2009

Name: Lori Romick

Address: 10 Valery Court, Milford, CT 06461

SUPPORT for Senate Bill #5809 (LCO #850) ,

An Act Renaming the State's Shellfish Research Vessel the "John H. Volk"

To: The Honorable Richard Roy, Co-Chairman, The Honorable Edward Meyer, Co-Chairman, The Honorable Paul Davis, Vice-Chairman, The Honorable Andrew M. Maynard, Vice Chairman, The Honorable John McKinney, Ranking Member, The Honorable Clark J. Chapin, Ranking Member and the Members of the Environment Committee

The Friends and Family of John Volk respectfully request consideration by the State Legislature to honor a lifelong commitment to the natural and economic resources of the State, Long Island Sound and the CT Shellfish Industry by permitting the re-naming of the current research vessel (Yankee Oyster) to the "John H. Volk."

John was a true leader setting an example of not only what a state employee should be, but what a true steward is, protecting one of our most valuable resources, Long Island Sound. We wish that his legacy may continue.

- *John H. Volk was the dedicated Director for the distinct office of the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Aquaculture for 21 years, from 1982 through 2003, balancing the role of regulator with the role of industry supporter.*
- *John spent his career diligently working for the shellfish industry and for improvements to Long Island Sound. John respected both the economic and biologic value of this natural and renewable resource and had great foresight.*
- *The citizens of CT have benefited greatly by his undaunting efforts to protect our marine resources, support efforts to restore the Sound's health, and to promote this economically valuable industry and recreational opportunity.*

- *John actively worked with many Federal, State, and local group including the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Commission, Northeast Shellfish Sanitation Association, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, Connecticut Coves and Embayment Advisory Board, and Connecticut Sea Grant Review Panel. He was a member of the Long Island Sound Advisory Council, and a founding member of the CT Seafood Council. Under his leadership the Bureau provided assistance to the University of Connecticut, National Marine Fisheries Service, the US Environmental Protection Agency, and local shellfish commissions. John worked with specialists from the Department of Environmental Protection conducting resource and habitat surveys and developing shellfish resource maps for the coastline.*
- *John was also an advisor, playing a major role, supporting the State's effort to build two regional vocational aquaculture schools.*
- *During the 1980's John chaired the Legislative Aquaculture Commission Study and the Aquaculture Committee for the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Commission (ISSC). Together, with John's guidance, industry, regulatory agencies, education and municipal officials all met to lay the framework for aquaculture development in the State of Connecticut, and for that matter, the country.*
- *In 1993, John became a member of the Board of Directors for the National Association of Aquaculture Coordinators. John continued to foster the growth of the industry and protection of this most valuable natural and renewable resource in 1997 by engaging State legislators to have funding bonded for an oyster cultch program that would aid in the continued recruitment of setting oysters for the industry off of the State Natural Shellfish Beds.*
- *During his State career John received several State awards for Excellent Managerial Performance, an Honorary State Future Farmers of America degree, the Rhode Island House of Representatives Citation for Expertise in Aquaculture, and the Governor's Award for service to the state. John was long recognized as the consummate expert for issues pertaining to Long Island Sound and the shellfish industry.*

Unlike buildings, bridges, and other state property; all State research vessels are named. This vessel naming is not for a state construction project but for a specific piece of State equipment that was utilized to its fullest by John's direction for the continued growth of a historically and culturally Connecticut resource. This vessel has a specific use and was chosen for a specific purpose and its duties were decided by a specific individual; John H. Volk.

The current Bureau vessel was purchased from the State of Rhode Island in 1986 when John submitted his report to stimulate aquaculture development in the State. The vessel was originally named the "Rhode Oyster," and then renamed to the "Yankee Oyster." This requested renaming will long recognize John's significant contributions to a distinct State resource. We are requesting the change in the name of a vessel and are willing to provide funding for the repainting.

We feel that as the Bureau vessel was under his immediate direction and will serve as a fitting memorial tribute to his efforts. The shellfish resource and industry could not have been in better hands.

Respectfully submitted: The Friends and Family of John H. Volk

C/O Lori Romick

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Rebuttals:

- There are those that when asked of the plans for a tribute to John responded by saying that a plaque at the Bureau aquaculture would be fitting.

A plaque would be seen by very few. The effort expended by the late former Director Volk would not be appreciated with a token as small as a plaque. John's dream was to respect the value of Long Island Sound and the natural renewable shellfish resources for the citizens, recreational and commercial, of the State by protecting it and properly managing the resource.

For those that work and recreate on Long Island Sound, and for those that enjoy the bounty that it provides putting John H. Volk's name on the very vessel used to accomplish his goals would allow his name to be remembered and his dedication to continue. It would remind all of us who knew and respected him that his legacy will continue setting an example to be followed by others.

John utilized the vessel for a dedicated purpose. The legislature should continue to fund the utilization of this vessel for the purposes of surveying available shellfish resources and as assistance to the local shellfish commissions in the management and continued propagation of an important biologic and economic

naturally renewable resource from Long Island Sound. Bonding may be set for fuel and maintenance expenses.

- **There are those that are concerned with setting precedent.**

All state research vessels are named.

This vessel had a specific purpose under a specific director for 21 years.

This individual was considered to be the State expert on shellfish.

This individual always put the protection of Long Island Sound first knowing that by protecting the Sound, he was protecting not only the shellfish resource but all resources.

The renaming of this specific vessel represents commitment, dedication, and unselfish perseverance for the responsible management of the shellfish resources for the citizens of the state and as an integral part of long Island Sound.

- **There are those that feel that the current Bureau of Aquaculture vessel will not be put to good use or may be removed from State service.**

The vessel was purchased by a Director with foresight to be utilized for the continued management of a naturally renewable resource. As John utilized all Bureau vessels to their fullest by various local (State universities, shellfish commissions, aquaculture schools), state (DEP, economic development, Ct Sea Grant), and various federal agencies (Army Corps of Engineers, Food and Drug Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service).

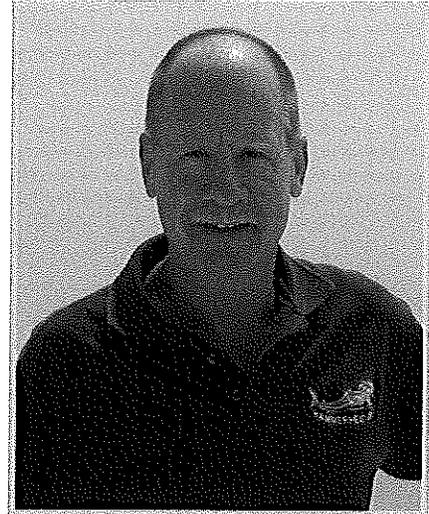
A vessel should continue to be available for these various agencies that require assistance supporting the resource and continuing to aid in protecting Long Island Sound.

Shellfish Industry Pioneer: John H. Volk

December 1, 1946 –November 12, 2007

John Henry Volk lived his life on the shores of Woodmont in Milford, CT diving, sailing, fishing, surfing and kayaking in Long Island Sound.

John served in the United States Navy from 1968 to 1972. He graduated Cum Laude from the University of New Haven in 1975 with a Bachelors of Science degree in Environmental Studies.



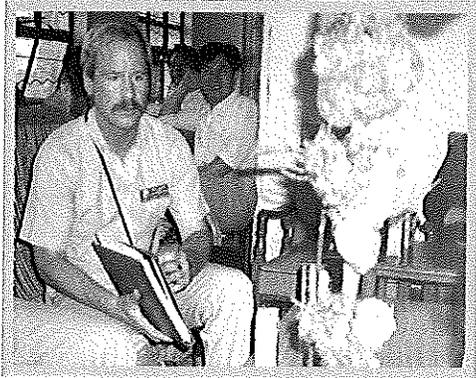
He started his shellfish career working for Long Island Oyster Farms as their principal biologist from 1978 to 1982. During that time, John collaborated with the Milford National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) Laboratory monitoring the time of oyster settling at various locations in Long Island Sound by looking for larvae in seawater samples and checking bags of shell for oyster spat. John continued this important work for many years.

In 1982, he accepted the position of Director for the State of Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Aquaculture Division (currently Bureau of Aquaculture) and remained in that position until his retirement in 2003.

Through the years many supporters have described John as being the "right person for the job." John joined the DoA as the replacement for John (Jack) Baker. Jack Baker had begun to make the CT Shellfish Aquaculture Program a force for advancing shellfish farming in CT but it fell to John Volk to take those ideas, integrate them with his own and make the program work. John was able to create a shellfish farming program that makes CT one of the most envied States in the country. While Jack Baker recognized the importance that the fishery could have and nurtured its recovery from the storms, starfish and disease problems that plagued it from the 1950's, it fell to John Volk to culture a program with credibility, respect and the daring which protects the present resources while striving to expand the industry into the foreseeable future. Along the way John established and maintained partnerships and friendships with politicians, researchers, regulators and within the industry he regulated. He was a unique blend of scientist, experienced harvester (with time in the wheelhouse and on the foredeck), and a personable man who wanted to see the shellfish industry flourish. John evolved the shellfish program from its roots in the late eighteen hundreds into the twenty-first century.

During the 1980's John chaired the Legislative Aquaculture Commission study and the Aquaculture Committee for the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Commission (ISSC). Together, with John's guidance, industry, regulatory agencies, education and municipal officials all met to lay the framework for aquaculture development in the State of Connecticut. John's ability to shape the outcome provided the critical foundation for aquaculture in our State and for that matter, the country.

John was also an advisor, playing a major role, supporting the State's effort to build regional vocational aquaculture schools. During the winter of 1982, and soon after he began as Division Chief, John had an opportunity to suggest that education be part of the legislative commission on aquaculture. When the final report was issued in January 1986, it included a provision that the State should move forward with the establishment of aquaculture high schools. Today, we have two such schools with the possibility of one more. And all thanks to John's vision and his care for the environment.



In 1987, John was selected as a United States Aquaculture Ambassador for the People to People Citizen Ambassador Program, Shellfish Research and Production Delegation to the Peoples Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan). He had the privilege of meeting with government officials, ministers of agriculture, and aquaculturists as well as university professors, laboratory directors and staff.

Perhaps the most important single project that John oversaw, was the integration of the State Health Department Shellfish Sanitation responsibilities into the new Bureau of Aquaculture in 1989. When the "engagement" of the programs was announced the Health Department staff performing shellfish sanitation testing was comfortably located in Hartford, the regulators were well established in Milford and there wasn't space or funding available to consolidate the programs. While in hindsight it looks like a marriage made in heaven, for the folks in Milford, it meant growing in every sense of the word. For the staff at the Health Department, it meant uprooting and relocating from Hartford and the well supplied laboratories there. The state of the art, shellfish management building at 190 Rogers Avenue is a tribute to the efforts of many people, particularly the Bloom Brothers Shellfish Companies, but it was John who oversaw and developed the programs that set the stage for the remarkable successes of the shellfish industry into the late 1990s.

The 1990's was an extremely productive period during John's career. He was an active participant on many shellfish committees directing the shellfish program at a national level developing initiatives, writing regulations, and collaborating on numerous research studies. The Bureau provided assistance to UCONN, NMFS, the EPA, and local shellfish commissions. John participated in annual Fishery Forums at Avery Point. John worked with specialists from the Department to Environmental Protection conducting resource and habitat surveys and developing shellfish resource maps for the CT coastline. In 1993 John became a member of the Board of Directors for the National Association of Aquaculture Coordinators. John wholeheartedly supported and was instrumental in the formation of the CT Seafood Council promoting CT shellfish. John continued to foster the growth of the industry and protection of this most valuable natural and renewable resource in 1997 by engaging State Legislators to have funding bonded for an oyster cultch program that would aid in the continued recruitment of setting oysters for the industry off of the State Natural Shellfish Beds.

Although not the first of its kind for John to deal with, John's greatest hurdle, the Cross Sound Cable project, was placed during the early 2000's. John put himself in the forefront of people working to limit any adverse impacts and to advance our understanding of placement and operation consequences. Leading the initial opposition to the proposal, strongly voicing his opposition to the degradation that he believed would be the result, John ventured into the Connecticut State Siting Council hearings armed with facts that helped convince them that an alignment that crossed healthy shellfish beds should be avoided. While that initial alignment proposed to parallel the Federal Navigation project it would have crossed some of the most productive shellfish setting beds in the entire State. Those efforts established their right to testify, the value of that testimony to such proceedings and their daring intervention helped carry the day for the shellfisheries. The alignment was denied. The next alignment offered by the Utility Company avoided the beds but would sit within the channel and cross three Shellfish Company's beds as it stretched to Shoreham, New York. As he had with the Iroquois Gas Pipeline and the Norwalk power cables, John returned to the negotiation table to develop monitoring and mitigation plans that would protect CT shellfish and harvesters from unanticipated situations. While others around him focused on perceptions, John led the Bureau of Aquaculture on a search for truth and knowledge. We are the better for his efforts and regulators faced with cabling projects routinely refer to the guidance generated by the monitoring program for the project.

John was an active member of many boards and commissions including; the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Commission, Northeast Shellfish Sanitation Association, National Association of State Aquaculture Coordinators, Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture School, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, Connecticut Coves and Embayment Advisory Board, Connecticut State Aquaculture Commission, Connecticut Sea Grant Grants Committee, and the Connecticut Seafood Council.

During his twenty-one years in State service (1982-2003), John received several awards of achievement and commendation including; several State of CT awards for Excellent Managerial Performance, an Honorary State Future Farmers of America degree, the Rhode Island House of Representatives Citation for Expertise in Aquaculture, and the CT Governor's Award for service to the state. John was long recognized as the consummate expert for issues pertaining to Long Island Sound and the shellfish industry. He also authored numerous shellfish and aquaculture related journal articles.

"I tell my students that one person can make a difference; one person can change things and help shape their future. They often say how do I know it, and I say, it's just true. I knew John Volk." (Tim Visel)

"May his example be followed and his service never be forgotten." (LR)

Contributors: Lori Romick, Mike Ludwig, Tim Visel, Renee Mercaldo-Allen, Sandy Macfarlane, and Nancy Balcom



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Print Status of Bills on This List

8 bills with "naming" in title In Session Year 2009

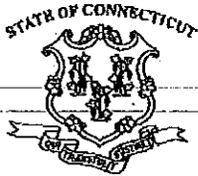
Bill Number	Title
HB05259	AN ACT NAMING A BRIDGE ON ROUTE 8 IN MEMORY OF TROOPER JAMES SAVAGE.
HB05809	AN ACT RENAMING THE STATE'S SHELLFISH RESEARCH VESSEL THE "JOHN H. VOLK".
HB06082	AN ACT NAMING THE PART OF ROUTE 10 LOCATED IN CENTRAL SOUTHTON IN MEMORY OF POLICE CHIEF TOM FOLEY.
HB06211	AN ACT NAMING THE PORTION OF ROUTE 82 BETWEEN SALEM FOUR CORNERS TO THE JUNCTION WITH ROUTE 11 IN SALEM THE OFFICER H. DAVID CORDELL MEMORIAL HIGHWAY.
HB06217	AN ACT NAMING ROUTE 22 IN NEW HAVEN WEST OF U.S. ROUTE 5 IN HONOR OF AMVETS POST NO. 9.
SB00148	AN ACT CONCERNING THE NAMING OF ROADS, BRIDGES AND HIGHWAYS BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN MEMORY OF PERSONS OR IN COMMEMORATION OF ORGANIZATIONS.
SB00562	AN ACT NAMING A PORTION OF ROUTE 309 TO ROUTE 167 IN SIMSBURY.
SB00740	AN ACT NAMING THE ROUTE 4 BRIDGE IN FARMINGTON IN MEMORY OF VINCENT DIPIETRO.



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AN ACT CONCERNING THE NAMING OF ROADS, BRIDGES AND HIGHWAYS B... Page 1 of 1



General Assembly
January Session, 2009

Proposed Bill No. 148
LCO No. 369

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Introduced by:

SEN. DEFRONZO, 6th Dist.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE NAMING OF ROADS, BRIDGES AND HIGHWAYS BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN MEMORY OF PERSONS OR IN COMMEMORATION OF ORGANIZATIONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That the General Assembly may name roads, bridges and highways in memory of persons or in commemoration of organizations and the Department of Transportation shall erect suitable signage at such locations.

Statement of Purpose:

To provide for the naming of roads, bridges and highways by the General Assembly.



General Assembly
January Session, 2009

Proposed Bill No. 6217
LCO No. 2107

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Introduced by:

REP. FONTANA, 87th Dist.

AN ACT NAMING ROUTE 22 IN NEW HAVEN WEST OF U.S. ROUTE 5 IN HONOR OF AMVETS POST NO. 9.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That Route 22 in New Haven west of U.S. Route 5 shall be named the Amvets Post No. 9 Highway.

Statement of Purpose:

To honor and commemorate the service of our veterans.

General Assembly
January Session, 2009

Proposed Bill No. 6211
LCO No. 1754

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Introduced by:

REP. JUTILA, 37th Dist.

SEN. STILLMAN, 20th Dist.

AN ACT NAMING THE PORTION OF ROUTE 82 BETWEEN SALEM FOUR CORNERS TO THE JUNCTION WITH ROUTE 11 IN SALEM THE OFFICER H. DAVID CORDELL MEMORIAL HIGHWAY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That the Department of Transportation shall designate the stretch of road on Route 82 between Salem Four Corners and the junction of Route 11 in Salem the Officer H. David Cordell Memorial Highway.

Statement of Purpose:

To honor the memory of fallen Officer H. David Cordell for his service as a police officer.

General Assembly
January Session, 2009

Proposed Bill No. 5809
LCO No. 850

Referred to Committee on Environment

Introduced by:

REP. ROY, 119th Dist.

AN ACT RENAMING THE STATE'S SHELLFISH RESEARCH VESSEL THE "JOHN H. VOLK".

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That the general statutes be amended to require the Department of Agriculture's dedicated vessel, used for the research and survey of shellfish populations in Long Island Sound and docked at the Bureau of Aquaculture office in Milford, be named the "John H. Volk" for a period of no less than twenty years and that if the current vessel, "Yankee Oyster", is removed from state service, the next most prominent vessel by size and use docked at the Bureau of Aquaculture in Milford be named the "John H. Volk" until such time that a larger and more prominent research vessel is acquired for such research and survey purposes.

Statement of Purpose:

To rename the state's shellfish research vessel after the late John H. Volk in recognition of his long and meritorious service to the state and its shellfish industry.

General Assembly
January Session, 2009

Proposed Bill No. 6082
LCO No. 1346

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Introduced by:

REP. ZALASKI, 81st Dist.

AN ACT NAMING THE PART OF ROUTE 10 LOCATED IN CENTRAL SOUTHTON IN MEMORY OF POLICE CHIEF TOM FOLEY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That the portion of Route 10 located in central Southington be named in memory of Police Chief Tom Foley.

Statement of Purpose:

To honor Tim Foley who was Southington's first police chief and was killed by a car in front of the old Colonial theater in downtown Southington.

General Assembly
January Session, 2009

Proposed Bill No. 5259
LCO No. 91

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Introduced by:

REP. MINER, 66th Dist.

AN ACT NAMING A BRIDGE ON ROUTE 8 IN MEMORY OF TROOPER JAMES SAVAGE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That bridge #00608 on state Route 8 near the Harwinton/Litchfield town line be named in memory of Trooper James Savage.

Statement of Purpose:

To name bridge #00608 on state Route 8 in memory of Trooper James Savage.