



CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

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Public Hearing – February 23, 2009 Environment Committee

**Testimony Submitted by Larry Marsicano
Executive Director, Candlewood Lake Authority**

In Support of

HB 5820 – AN ACT CONSERVING NATURAL VEGETATION NEAR WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES

The federal Clean Water Act requires that wetlands be protected from degradation because of their multiple, important ecological roles including maintenance of high water quality and provision of habitat for fish and wildlife. For the last 15 years, this protection has slowed the precipitous decline in wetland acreage observed in the United States since European settlement. However, protection of wetlands generally does not encompass riparian areas – the lands bordering waterbodies such as rivers, lakes, and estuaries – even though they often provide many of the same functions as wetlands.

*From Riparian Areas: Functions and Strategies for Management by the
National Research Council, 2003*

The National Research Council's message speaks volumes to the importance of passing HB 5820 – AN ACT CONSERVING NATURAL VEGETATION NEAR WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES. The NRC's book and many other scientific texts and peer-reviewed journal articles describe the multiple ecological values riparian areas or natural buffers provide including water quality protection, shoreline erosion prevention, fish and wildlife habitat protection, and promotion of biological diversity, as well as protection of drinking water and flood prevention. Most every inland wetland commissioner or enforcement officer, environmental scientist, and water resource advocate understands the importance of buffer protection.

In other states that are proactive in their protection of water resources including New Hampshire, Maine, Wisconsin, and Michigan, similar legislation has been enacted. In a

number of those states you find it under their *Shoreland Protection Act*. In those places, the State empowers municipalities to take steps to protect the naturally vegetated areas around rivers, streams and lakes. As Connecticut is also blessed with many important inland water resources, we should be doing the same.

As Executive Director of the Candlewood Lake Authority and Vice President of the Connecticut Federation of Lakes, I strongly support the passing of HB 5820 – AN ACT CONSERVING NATURAL VEGETATION NEAR WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES. I am also supportive of the proposed language for the act attached to the testimony submitted by Mr. Curtis Johnson from the Connecticut Fund for the Environment.

Below you will find a bibliography of selected references from my collection of publications on buffers, many of which are available on the Internet. You may find these useful in your research. I apologize not being able to testify in person, but would be happy to provide additional information and answer questions is so desired in future deliberations on this important bill. Thank you for consideration of this testimony on this bill.

Riparian Buffer References

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