

# COALITION OF CONNECTICUT SPORTSMEN

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Testimony presented to the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE, February 18, 2009

## IN OPPOSITION to H. B. No. 6371 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

by Robert T. Crook, Director

We don't know who wrote this bill, but obviously there was little understanding of how the DEP is structured. Doubling virtually all licenses and fees may have some validity in this budget crisis, but one has to differentiate between the Environmental Quality (EQ) Branch (**Regulatory, Enforcement**) and Environmental Conservation (EC) Branch (**Public Recreation: Hunting, Fishing, Parks**). The impact of this proposal on the public is substantially different considering the missions of the two branches. Without separate evaluation of the two, this bill will have tremendous impact on Sportsmen, other public Recreationalists, tourism, and associated business revenue. **We believe this doubled increase will not generate the anticipated amount or may lose revenue due to attrition when participation in all fee-paid outdoor activities is currently decreasing.**

**Doubling Sportsmen Fees is Outrageous!** Fee increases have always attempted to be compatible with regional states. A perusal of the attached regional fee schedule of License/Tag fees demonstrates CT will be far above the norm. The 40% increase in license and permit fees 7 years ago resulted in a 5 to 8% reduction in license sales; the proposed 100% increase will result in much greater attrition in a time when both Fishing and Hunting participants are already decreasing. The proposed fees will eliminate any non-resident license purchases. **Any proposal for license and fee increases that are not the result of DEP recommendations in consultation with the sporting community, and in balance with adjoining states must be rejected.**

**We reject eliminating the Environmental Conservation Fund and all Special Funds including the Boating Fund, Motorboat Fuel Tax Fund, and transfer of these funds to the General Fund.** The Conservation Fund has allowed DEP expertise to address overall program management and critical problems expeditiously rather than relying on inflexible General Funding determined by the Legislature/Administration. While we deplore the non-General Fund positions that cost these funds 100 + 62% fringe benefits; the return through user input, coordination, and DEP accomplishment offset the increased manpower costs.

We're told the Pheasant program is eliminated and DEP did not request elimination. The Pheasant Program is entirely funded by pheasant hunters in CT-No State funds are used to support the program. There is no rational or financial reason for elimination. In fact, elimination of the pheasant program will result in a further loss of license sales. **We reject any proposal to eliminate the CT DEP Pheasant Program.**

**NEW FEES-Ends of the Spectrum:** For a resident parent to take his >16 year-old fishing trout for a few days it will cost each \$40. Saltwater each \$30. For the avid sportsman, a combination Supersport All Waters & Firearms + Deer (Private land) Permit & Turkey (Spring Private land) Permit \$116, add 2 state land permits @ \$28 ea, add Archery \$60, add Muzzleloader permits State & Private \$28 each, add Fall Turkey State & Private \$28; TOTAL \$344. A NY Super Sportsman license is \$250 including virtually all activities.

In summary: Sportsmen are pleased with DEP programs and performance. DEP funding must improve, but diminishing lawful participation solves nothing. **Sportsmen would be amenable to reasoned fee increases approximating 25% and in relative balance with other regional states.**

Thank you.

Fees H, F, T Special	ME	MA	NH	NY	RI	VT	CT Current	CT NEW
Hunting - Resident Firearms								
Adult Hunting (incl Big game)		\$27.50	\$22	\$19		\$18.00	\$20.00	\$14.00
Combination Hunting & Fishing	\$38.00	\$45.00	\$46		\$33.00	\$32	\$28.00	\$56
Adult Small Game only	\$14							
Junior Hunting	\$7	\$11.50			\$18.00	\$8.00	\$3.00	\$15
Junior Combination						\$12.00		
Adult Archery Hunting	\$21	\$5.10	\$22	\$16		\$17.00	\$30.00	\$60
Youth Archery Hunting							\$13.00	\$26
Muzzleloading	\$13	\$5.10	\$16	\$16		\$17.00		
Turkey Permit Fall							\$14 ea St & Priv	\$28 ea
Turkey Permit Spring			\$16	\$5	\$7.50/each	\$17.00	\$14 ea St & Priv	\$28 ea
Deer Permits Firearms					\$12.50/each		\$14 ea St & Priv	\$28 ea
Deer Permits Muzzleloader							\$14 ea St & Priv	\$28 ea
Super Sportsman	\$200.00			\$68				
Pheasant	\$17.00						\$14	\$28 ELIM?
<b>Trapping</b>								
Resident	\$35	\$35.50	\$28.50	\$16	\$20.00		\$25.00	\$50
Jr Trapping	\$9.00	\$11.50	\$6.50	\$6	\$10.00		\$3.00	\$15
Trapping Non-Resident	\$310	\$200.00	\$301	\$255			\$200.00	\$250
<b>Hunting-Nonresident Firearms</b>								
Adult (includes Big Game)		\$99.50	\$103	\$110	\$45.00	\$90.00		
Adult Small Game Only	\$67	\$65.50	\$53	\$55		\$40.00	\$67.00	\$134
Adult Combination BG and Fishing	\$102		\$141			\$120.00		
Adult Combination SG and Fishing	\$137						\$88.00	\$176
3-day Small Game 3 consec days)	\$42		\$25					
7-day Small Game (7 consec days)								
Junior Hunting	\$27			\$5	\$45.00	\$25.00	\$3.00	\$15
Junior Combination				\$14		\$30.00		
Adult Archery Only	\$62		\$73	\$110		\$25.00	\$100.00	\$200
Youth Archery Hunting							\$13.00	\$26
Muzzle-loading	\$62		\$41	\$110		\$25.00		
Deer Permits Firearms					\$25.50/each		\$50 ea St & Priv	\$100 ea
Deer Permits Muzzleloader							\$50 ea St & Priv	\$100 ea
Pheasant Permit			\$16				\$14.00	\$28 Elim?
Turkey	\$47		\$31	\$30	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$14.00	\$28

	ME	MA	NH	NY	RI	VT	CT Current	CT PROP 09
Fishing- Resident								
Adult fishing	\$21	\$27.50	\$35	\$19	\$18.00	\$20	\$20.00	\$40
Youth Fishing		\$11.50				\$8.00		
1-Day Fishing			\$10	\$15				
3 Day Fishing						\$10.00		
7 Day Fishing				\$12				
Marine Fishing License							Proposed 08	
Resident							\$15	\$30
1-Day Fishing							\$5	\$15
All Waters Fishing							\$25	\$50
Comb Inland Fish & Firearms Hunt							\$28	\$56
Comb Marine & Firearms Hunt							\$25	\$50
Comb All Water & Firearms Hunt							\$30	\$60
Comb All Water & Archery Deer							\$42	\$84
Super Sport All Waters, Firearms & Deer & Turkey Permits							\$58	\$116
Archery Super Sport All Waters & Spring Turkey							\$52	\$104
Non Resident								
Marine Fishing License							\$30	\$60
Marine 3 Day							\$12	\$24
All Waters Fishing							\$50	\$100
Comb Inland Waters & Firearms Hunt							\$88	\$176
Comb All Waters & Firearms Hunt							\$95	\$190
Comb Marine Waters & Firearms Hunt							\$85	\$170
Fishing - Nonresident								
Adult season fishing	\$52	\$37.50	\$53	\$40	\$35.00	\$41.00	\$40.00	\$80
Super Sportsman				\$250				
15-Day Fishing		\$40						
7 -Day Fishing		\$36	\$35	\$25		\$30.00		
3 Day Fishing		\$23	\$28		\$16.00	\$20.00	\$16.00	\$32
1-Day Fishing		\$11	\$15	\$15		\$15.00		
Junior Fishing						\$15.00		
Trout Stamp					\$5.50			