



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing – February 23, 2010
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Amey Marrella
Department of Environmental Protection

**House Committee Bill No. 5364 - AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN FISHING BY A
NONLICENSED STATE RESIDENT UNDER THE FISHING LICENSE OF A STATE
RESIDENT.**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding House Committee Bill No. 5364 - AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN FISHING BY A NONLICENSED STATE RESIDENT UNDER THE FISHING LICENSE OF A STATE RESIDENT. The Department of Environmental Protection (Department) supports this bill as it will complement the agency's "No Child Left Inside" program and other initiatives that strive to connect Connecticut's citizens with the outdoors and our natural resources.

This bill provides a simple and free opportunity for Connecticut recreational anglers to directly share their knowledge and passion for angling with friends, relatives, and colleagues. This is one of the most effective ways of introducing new participants to the relaxing and stress-free experience of fishing. This legislation will aid in developing new supporters for our conservation programs and our environment.

The Department does wish to offer the following substitute language (*italicized*) that will enable the Department to meet federal registry requirements and our goals for increasing participation:

(NEW) (i) The Commissioner of Environmental Protection shall designate *one or more days* in each calendar year *for which a free one-day license may be issued for sport fishing* to a resident of this state provided such resident, while fishing on such designated day, is accompanied by a resident of this state who has a resident fishing license issued by the commissioner.

The proposed revision provides for a free one day license on designated "Free Fishing Days." By requiring the un-licensed resident to obtain a DEP one day license, the Department can collect the information required to meet the terms of Connecticut's exemption from the National Saltwater Angler Registry. Under this exemption, Connecticut's marine anglers are not required to register in the federal system (currently a \$15.00 registration fee). The provisions of this bill, as currently written, could lead to loss of the State's exemption. Additionally, the free license requirement would provide the Department with contact information from potential new customers and with a larger target audience for delivery of our educational and outreach materials.

The proposed revision would also enable to Department to designate multiple free fishing days in a calendar year thereby increasing the efficacy of this tool for recruitment and long-term revenue enhancement.

The Department's automated licensing system can currently support a designated free fishing day license. The license could be made available from the date of announcement up through the designated day of the event. The printed license would indicate that it is only good for that day, and obtaining the free license for the designated day or days would not preclude the buyer from obtaining a normal license in the same year.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact the Department's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at 424-3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov