



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Testimony presented to the Environment Committee of

The Connecticut General Assembly

By the Connecticut Department of Agriculture

March 7, 2012

H.B. 5305 An Act Prohibiting the Use of Bamboo Stakes to Mark Shellfish Grounds

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture stands in strong opposition to H.B. 5305. The Department's understanding of the intent of the bill is that surface buoys would act as the replacement for bamboo stakes that rise significantly above the water line. From our experience, buoys would provide clarity to the shell fishermen as to where they were working, but would not provide enforcement capabilities to regulators or neighboring industry operations. The bamboo stakes, which extend five feet above the high water mark, allow for supervision from land or other vessels as the flags adjoined to the top of the bamboo stake are clearly visible. A buoy floating on the surface six to eight inches above the water is not nearly as visible.

In addition, DEEP State Environmental Conservation Police would be hampered in their ability to determine if a shell fisherman was working in their own restrictive relay areas or on another shellfish company's bed. This could lead to a public health issue related to the consumption of raw shellfish from polluted areas or from another company's bed where shellfish requiring depuration were planted. A twelve inch buoy, half submerged by water is not comparable to a bamboo stake, five feet tall, with two flags attached to the top identifying the lot number.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's written testimony.