



**Thames Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited**

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Re: S.B. 343

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, and Members of the Committee,

**We, a, local volunteer grassroots chapter of a national coldwater conservation organization, Trout Unlimited, respectfully oppose S.B. 343.**

As an organization whose Mission Statement is, "To conserve, protect, and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds," this bill will severely limit the abilities of an environmental intervener to face and act on environmental threats without the protection that is afforded under Section 22a-19 of the CT General Statutes.

Being staffed entirely by dedicated volunteers, local chapters of Trout Unlimited, including Thames Valley, do not have the funding to hire lawyers, yet we often offer our expertise to assist municipal agencies with applications which may pose threats to coldwater fisheries. We are not professionals, we are passionate river stewards. We are a non-profit organization and our fundraising barely covers the costs of our chapter projects such as youth outreach, the Trout in the Classroom program, stream bank restoration, fish ladder improvements, and maintaining access to certain areas. The proposed bill would *eliminate* our ability to act as interveners in the public review process for proposed activities that pose significant threats to coldwater resources and the ecosystems they inhabit by placing our chapter members under threat of financial retaliation.

Section 52-568 of the CT General Statutes already discourages the bringing of civil actions without probable cause and provides a remedy for bad faith intervenors.

I can see no reason for this proposed bill other than to dissuade intervention from concerned citizens for fear of being sued.

On behalf of all 465 members of Thames Valley Trout Unlimited, thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Respectfully yours,

*Hendrik Verkade IV 3/7/12*

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