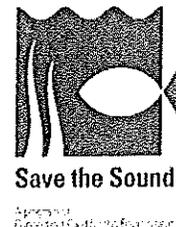




Testimony of:  
Save the Sound  
a program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment



In Support of  
HB 6528, AA Concerning Clean Marinas

Before the Commerce Committee

March 7, 2013

Submitted by Leah Schmalz, Dir. of Legislative and Legal Affairs

*Connecticut Fund for the Environment is a non-profit organization that, along with its regional program Save the Sound, works to protect and improve the land, air and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound on behalf of its 5,500 members. We develop partnerships and use legal and scientific expertise to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.*

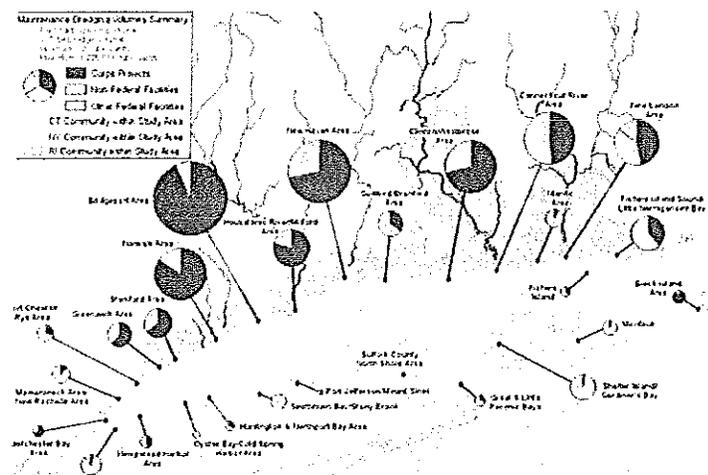
Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Committee:

Save the Sound, a program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment submits this testimony in support of H.B. 6528, An Act Concerning Clean Marinas, which will help marinas certified by the Connecticut DEEP's Clean Marina Program apply for small grants to assist with the dredging needs of our state marinas. However, to ensure the intent of the bill is carried out, we offer one change of phrase in section 2 (see below). With this change, H.B. 6528 will unite environmental, economic and recreational benefits.

**Benefits of Clean Marinas:** Long Island Sound provides \$8.5 billion to the regional economy every year. Healthy water quality is key to human health, tourism, and fishing industries, but the Sound remains plagued by various types of pollution. Because marinas are on the water, their direct activities (like boat cleaning and fueling operations) and contaminants from their properties (like stormwater runoff from parking lots and hull maintenance/repair areas) often contribute to water quality problems in the Sound. To help combat this problem, Connecticut established a program that encouraged marina owners to implement best management practices to minimize their impacts on the water. Clean Marinas identify opportunities and implement practices to control pollution associated with mechanical activities, painting & fiberglass repair, hauling and storing boats, fueling, facility management, and emergency planning. There are about 30 certified clean marinas in the state and another 20 have pledged to make the necessary changes to get certified. Unfortunately, new Clean Marinas are on hold due to limited CTDEEP

resources. Thankfully the state is in the process of identifying options that would allow the program to move forward.

**Dredging Needs:** Our marina industry generates in excess of \$1.5 billion a year in economic



activity and provides public access to the Sound for tens of thousands of our citizens. If the sediments that accumulate in our channels and harbors are not occasionally dredged, boaters cannot access marinas and businesses suffer. Currently, the need for dredging in Connecticut is great.

While limited funding for major federal navigation projects is available, obtaining assistance for small marina dredging projects is exceptionally difficult. This means that many marinas cannot afford this costly work, so their channels gradually accumulate silt and can eventually become impassible to boats with deeper drafts.

**Co-Benefits of a Linked Program:** It is clear that clean marinas are good for the Sound and that dredging funds are needed for marinas to stay open. A cost-sharing program that links participation in the CTDEEP Clean Marina Program with small grants for maintenance dredging of marinas will provide an economic incentive system that supports public access and results in a healthier Sound. Providing ten percent of the project costs to those clean marinas will make dredging more feasible while creating engineering and dredging jobs and keeping marina businesses open and profitable—all of which benefit the state's economy.

**Suggested Language Change:** Last year, this concept was raised in SB 220 and enjoyed strong support from legislators, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, marinas and boatyards, and environmental advocates. To ensure marinas are able to access the funding contemplated in the bill, Save the Sound suggests revising language in section 2 to more closely reflect last year's amended language. While H.B. 6528 endeavors to provide access to funding

through section 13b-57 (see section 1 (b) of the bill), under the current version marinas are not one of entities allowed to contract with CTDOT. It specifies that in addition to municipalities, “federal agencies or other state agencies” may enter into contracts with the Commissioner of Transportation. Marinas are not federal agencies, nor are they state agencies and as such would be excluded from contracting with CTDOT. Last year’s final version used the broader phrase “federal agencies or other entity.” The proposed language change is as follows:

Sec. 2. Section 13b-57 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2013):

The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of Transportation, may enter into a contract with a municipality, [acting by its harbor improvement agency] federal agency or other entity, for state financial assistance in the form of a state grant-in-aid for a harbor improvement project pursuant to [a harbor improvement plan] section 13b-55a, provided such project is approved by the Commissioner of Transportation. [in the form of a state grant-in-aid.] Any such application for state financial assistance under this section shall be submitted by the Commissioner of Transportation to the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection for his review. Said Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall submit a written report to the Commissioner of Transportation, setting forth his findings regarding such application.

In conclusion, H.B. 6528 incentivizes marina practices that protect Long Island Sound, provide navigation investments to maintain public access create jobs and support small businesses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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