

Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing – March 8, 2013
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Daniel C. Esty
Presented By Deputy Commissioner Susan Whalen

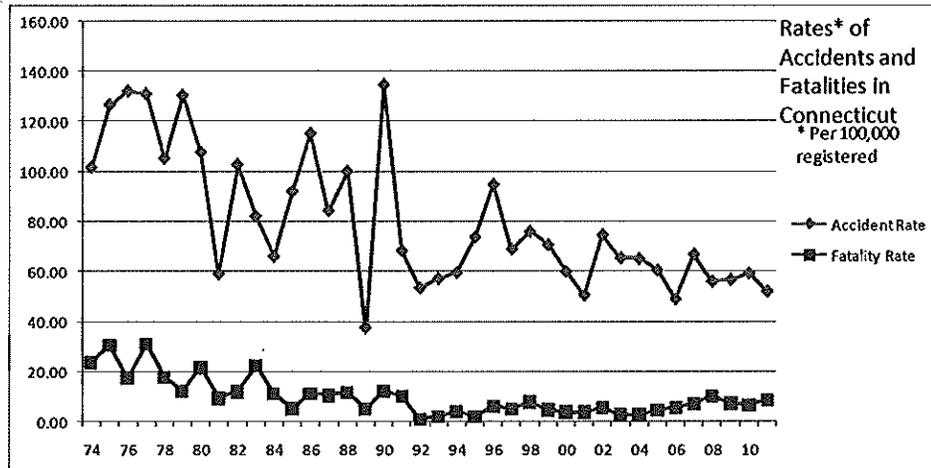
House Bill 5811 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF VESSELS WITH ELECTRIC MOTORS ON INLAND WATERS OF THE STATE

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised House Bill No. 5811 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF VESSELS WITH ELECTRIC MOTORS ON INLAND WATERS OF THE STATE. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) offers the following testimony.

DEEP opposes this bill because under current law boats with electric motors must be registered and their operators must be certified. Most of these electric motored boats can easily attain speed in excess of Connecticut's Slow-No-Wake speed of 6 mph. In addition, boats with electric motors often have lights and can be used at night. Whether in a boat with electric engine or internal combustion engine, boaters still need to; know the rules of the road, understand how to interpret the lights they see on the water at night, understand basic concepts of stability, and behave in a safe and predictable manner. To exclude this group of boaters could result in more boating accidents.

Under Connecticut law, any boat that has a motor of any kind must be registered, and any person operating a registered boat needs to have a safe-boating certificate. Such a certificate is made available only after a candidate passes a proctored boating-safety examination. This system ensures that each certified boater has demonstrated a minimum working knowledge of boating safety, and that he or she is familiar with Connecticut-specific boating laws and regulations. Connecticut was one of the first to require mandatory boating education, and the requirement resulted in a measurable drop in boating accidents and boating-related fatalities. In other words, the system works.

The graph below depicts Connecticut's rate of boating accidents based on 100,000 registered boats. Accident rates have been depressed since mandatory boating education began in 1993.



Engine manufacturers are increasing their lines of electric engines and are manufacturing higher horsepower engines. In the future we can expect to see larger electric engines powering larger boats. With this in mind, DEEP cannot sanction putting an entirely new class of uneducated operators of motorized boats into harm's way.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact DEEP's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at 860-424-3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov.