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Testimony in Support of HB 5182

An Act Concerning the Role, Duties, Powers, and Training of Harbor Masters

Transportation Committee

February 13, 2013

Good morning, Chairmen Maynard and Guerrera, Ranking Members Boucher and Scribner, and former fellow members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 5182.

This bill would establish a uniform policy to clarify the role and powers of Connecticut Harbor Masters, and would ensure that they are provided training to perform their duties.

Several of Connecticut's Harbor Masters have expressed to me a concern about ambiguities surrounding their role and powers, and have asked me to seek a legislative solution that would provide them the same kind of clarity that statutes provide to Lake Patrolmen and that we recently voted to provide to municipal animal control officers.

The lack of a consistent framework for the Harbor Masters seems to stem at least in part from the fact that responsibility for them falls within two different agencies, the DOT and the DEEP.

There are likely several ways to resolve the ambiguity and to eliminate the split in administrative responsibilities. I therefore purposely made the language of this bill very broad. It addresses the objective, rather than the solution, on which I defer to the Transportation Committee's discretion.

That said, I do believe that action must be taken so that the Harbor Masters can perform their job, and I respectfully ask the Committee to examine the alternatives and identify an appropriate solution.