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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 6305

AA PROHIBITING HUNTING IN PROXIMITY TO WILDLIFE PRESERVES

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile and members of the Environment Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 6305. I am State Representative Pat Widlitz of the 98th District which includes the towns of Guilford and Branford.

Several weeks ago I received complaints from constituents who reside near the National Audubon's Guilford Salt Meadows Sanctuary. Approximately 80 acres of the 212 acre Sanctuary is adjacent to the East River and hunters were shooting from boats and/or shallow water near the Audubon property. Guilford police were called and had no authority to restrict the hunting as the hunters were hunting from public waters. DEEP was contacted by law enforcement officials and informed them that there are no specific restrictions in the statutes regarding hunting near wildlife preserves.

The purpose of this bill is to allow the Commissioner to consider the proximity of a wildlife sanctuary when reviewing complaints regarding hunting. Adding this language to Sec. 26-67c would give the Commissioner the ability to restrict hunting when and where appropriate in relation to these protected areas.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislative proposal.