



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

February 8, 2013

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House Bill –6318 – An Act Concerning the Cultivation of Seaweed

The Department of Public Health (DPH) provides the following information regarding House Bill 6318.

The DPH, as authorized by C.G.S. 19a-36, is responsible for ensuring food products available for sale to the public and for use in foodservice establishments have originated from approved sources. Historically, a source has been deemed approved when the commodity has been produced and processed under either a federal or state regulatory program that ensures the safety of the final product entering commerce. By regulation, this means “based on a determination of conformity with principles, practices and generally recognized standards that protect public health.” When specific food products fall within the regulatory jurisdiction of another state agency, the DPH Food Protection Program has consistently collaborated with such sister agencies to develop and implement a strategy that ensures that the final product is in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, and hence an approved source product for use in foodservice facilities.

The DPH does not support this bill as it is currently written, but will support it entirely with the implementation of technical changes previously discussed and agreed upon with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Consumer Protection. These technical changes include the following:

- Line 5: Add “or plants” after aquatic animals
- Line 35: Strike “this” and add (b)(2) after subsection
- Line 36: Add “or aquatic plant” before producer and strike “or any person who produces aquatic plants”
- Lines 38 to 41: Strike “The Commissioner of Agriculture shall license and inspect producers of aquatic plants, including, but not limited to, seaweed producers. The commissioner may prescribe the length of term, fee and application for such license.”
- Line 42: Add “or aquatic plant” before producer and strike “or to produce aquatic plants”
- Line 43 to 44: Strike “meet processing standards, as prescribed by the commissioner, and”

It is the understanding of the DPH that a new aquaculture industry involving seaweed is being developed to promote locally grown seaweed as an “approved human food source.” The DPH supports this mission and supports this bill only with implementation of the above technical changes. As such, the DPH has been working in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Aquaculture, as well as the Department of Consumer Protection to develop policies and protocols for the growth of this new industry and will continue to do so.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony.

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