



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

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

Public Hearing – March 22, 2013
Environment Committee

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

Raised House Bill No. 6654 - AN ACT CONCERNING SPORTSMEN RELATED REVISIONS TO THE GENERAL STATUTES.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised House Bill No. 6654 – An Act Concerning Sportsmen Related Revisions to the General Statutes. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) offers the following testimony.

This proposal would (1) require DEEP to produce a report on establishing a bear hunting season, (2) establish a license for hunting and fishing guides, (3) establish a competitive process for awarding food service contracts in state parks and forests, (4) clarify the age at which a fishing license is required, (5) adjust the fee charged for certain combination hunting and fishing licenses and reduce the fee charged for hunting, trapping and fishing licenses for sportsmen under the age of 18, and (6) reduce the fee for hunting, trapping or fishing permits, tags or stamps for sportsmen under the age of 21.

Section 1

DEEP agrees that a report evaluating the establishment of a bear hunting season is needed. However, the University of Connecticut (UCONN) has just recently completed the first year of a four year study to: better determine the size of the black bear population in Northwest Connecticut, evaluate habitats for population expansion, and estimate future populations. These UCONN data study results along with ongoing information being collected by DEEP biologists are needed before options for the long-term management of bears, including hunting, can be developed and presented to the public. DEEP would be happy to keep the Committee informed of our progress with this study, so that the study may provide information for a logical course of action with respect to managing bears populations in Connecticut.

Section 2

DEEP supports this proposal to establish a fee for hunting and fishing guides. However, guide licenses typically involve a level of training and certification that is beyond what DEEP staff

resources are presently able to provide. We request that this proposal be redrafted as a guide registration rather than a license. DEEP staff are available to assist with this proposal.

Section 5

Section 5 of this bill clarifies the age at which a fishing license is required. It improves the language of the statute and addresses an issue that has caused confusion in the past, so DEEP supports this section.

Sections 6 and 7

DEEP is eager to encourage participation in outdoor recreation, especially by young people. Our goals are to promote life-long participation in outdoor recreation, develop the next generation of environmental stewards, and increase sales of fishing and hunting licenses and permits. Since any budget and policy issues become intertwined in this instance, DEEP is more than willing to engage in a dialogue with the Environment Committee, the Office of Policy and Management, sportsmen, and others to strike the right balance between encouraging participation in outdoor activities and achieving revenue projections.

These sections also correct the existing fees of two resident combination licenses to make them less than the sum of purchasing their components separately and correct one combination fee to make these fees equitable with other existing fees.

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.