

Testimony presented to the Environment Committee of
The Connecticut General Assembly
Submitted via e-mail by Brad Scher Owner / Captain Coastal Marine Fisheries
Feb. 14th, 2013

S.B. 803 – AN ACT CONCERNING AQUACULTURE JOB GROWTH

To whom it may concern Environment Committee,

It is difficult to form an appropriate response from concerned industry members to a public hearing with less than 24 hours action notice.

I am a Western Long Island Sound shell fisher men. I fully support S.B. 803 - a proposed act concerning aquaculture job growth. My son and I are one of the small shell fish harvesters described in the Feb. 11th, testimony by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

We are a small company with over \$400,000.00 investment in our boats and have paid the State of Connecticut in excess of \$346,000.00 in shellfish lease payments over the last 5 years. We have been forced to give up potentially long term productive leases because of exorbitant lease payments. This is contrary to the original shell fish lease intent of long term cultivation and improvement of the leased grounds. To date we have less than 250 acres of marginally productive leased shell fish grounds.

We have spent considerable time, effort and money assessing new grounds to lease, only to lose them in overpriced bid wars. The current prices being paid for state shell fish leases are not sustainable for responsible harvesting.

I would find it hard to believe any committee member would not support this proposed legislation. If passed would create opportunity, growth, sustainability, employment, innovation, new cultivated species, additional revenue for the state and not adversely affect existing large shell fish companies in any way.

Thank you

If any committee members would like to come and see what a small harvester is up against feel free to contact us any time.

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