



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

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

Public Hearing – March 17, 2014
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Robert J. Klee
Presented By Deputy Commissioner Susan Whalen

Raised Senate Bill No. 446 – AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT GRANT AND PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Senate Bill No. 446 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT GRANT AND PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

DEEP recognizes that the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) pose a serious threat to the native ecosystems and economic interests of the State of Connecticut. The range of impacts from AIS is extensive and includes degradation of habitat, localized extinction of rare species, spread of pathogens, choking of waterways, clogging of water intakes, fouling of water supplies, and interference with recreational activities such as fishing, boating and swimming. Economic impacts are reflected in the loss of property values, ongoing expenditures for control (e.g. application of herbicides), reductions in recreation and tourism related expenditures, and increased maintenance costs for water dependent industries.

The most critical needs for developing an effective state-wide AIS program are for prevention, and secondarily for long-term control. Prevention must focus on interrupting the pathways or vectors for introduction.

Please note, many non-native aquatic species are benign and some even provide significant environmental and public use benefits (e.g., European brown trout, largemouth bass). It is important to focus invasive species efforts on those species that are harmful and to direct scarce resources to species that can be effectively prevented, eliminated or managed.

While DEEP appreciates the spirit of the AIS Management Grant and Prevention and Education Program we support Governor Malloy's proposed budget adjustments for FY 15. The proposals in Raised Senate Bill No. 446 are not workable without an appropriation of funds that is not in keeping with the Governor's Budget. Additionally, the language at Line 17 that direct funding the Boating Division is also problematic as it is not reflected in the Governor's proposed budget adjustments for FY 15.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Robert LaFrance, DEEP's Director of Governmental Affairs, at 860.424.3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov (or, Elizabeth McAuliffe, DEEP Legislative Liaison, at 860.424.3458 or Elizabeth.McAuliffe@ct.gov).