



# Connecticut Harbor Management Association

VIA EMAIL AND REGULAR MAIL

February 28, 2014

Senator Andrew M. Maynard, Co-Chair  
Representative Antonio Guerrero, Co-Chair  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Transportation Committee  
Room 230  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

**Subject: Raised Bill No. 5289, An Act Establishing the Connecticut Port Authority**

Dear Senator Maynard and Representative Guerrero:

On behalf of the Board of Directors (Board) of the Connecticut Harbor Management Association (CHMA), I wish to provide comments and recommendations concerning Raised Bill No. 5289—An Act Establishing the Connecticut Port Authority.

The CHMA is a state-wide, not-for-profit organization representing the interests of municipal harbor management commissions, state harbor masters appointed by the Governor, and others concerned with Connecticut's harbors and marine resources. We are not a lobbying group. Our mission is to share information and facilitate coordination among our member commissions, the harbor masters, and state and federal agencies to address issues of common interest and concern.

In 2014 there are 20 towns with locally adopted and state-approved harbor management plans; several other towns are giving consideration to preparing such plans. In addition, there are more than 50 State of Connecticut harbor masters and deputy harbor masters, all of whom have significant authority for the safe and efficient operation of the state's waterways.

To the extent that Raised Bill No. 5289 may have a significant impact on all of Connecticut's ports and harbors, its adoption and implementation are of interest to all of our members. Our principal comments and recommendations at this time concern the possible impact of the proposed legislation on: 1) the existing State Maritime Office in the Department of Transportation (ConnDOT); 2) small and mid-sized harbors; and 3) the state's existing harbor master program.

**CHMA Board Members**

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**Geoffrey Steadman**

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## Comments and Recommendations

1. State Maritime Office: ConnDOT's State Maritime Office provides significant financial assistance to Connecticut's coastal towns, including state-bonded funds authorized by Public Act 11-57, Section 13(f) for "Port Infrastructure Improvements, Dredging, and Navigational Direction." While Sec. 9 of Raised Bill No. 5289 calls for the State Maritime Office to, among other things, serve as the Governor's principal maritime policy advisor, Sec. 13 of the proposed legislation would establish an Office of Maritime Development within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). It is unclear to us whether Raised Bill No. 5289 would maintain the existing grant-in-aid programs of the Maritime Office for harbor improvement projects. If not, would funding opportunities to small and mid-sized harbors be assumed by the DECD or the Connecticut Port Authority? The Board recommends that implementation of the proposed legislation should ensure continuation, in the most effective and efficient manner, of the existing services to municipalities now provided by the Maritime Office.
  
2. Small and Mid-Sized Harbors: It is unclear how establishment of a Connecticut Port Authority will affect small and mid-sized harbors. Raised Bill No. 5289 does not mention specifically the three major ports of Connecticut—Bridgeport, New Haven, and New London. Sec. 3, however, describes the powers and duties of the Connecticut Port Authority with reference to cargo movement and the domestic and international shipping industry. This implies an emphasis on the three major ports cited above. The General Assembly, in other legislation such as the Harbor Management Act, recognizes the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of small and mid-sized harbors in Connecticut. The CHMA Board is interested to know whether the new Connecticut Port Authority will only focus on needs of the three major ports. If this were the case, we would be concerned about the apparent lack of a state entity with powers and duties to assist the small and mid-sized harbors of the state. The Board recommends that implementation of the proposed legislation should ensure continuation of the existing opportunities, including funding venues, available to small and mid-sized harbors through ConnDOT's State Maritime Office and other state programs.
  
3. State Harbor Master Program: Connecticut's harbor masters and deputy harbor masters have a distinct and essential role, established in the General Statutes, for ensuring public safety and managing the state's waterways in the public interest. Harbor masters and deputy harbor masters are state officers appointed by the Governor and, pursuant to the General Statutes, are subject to the direction and control of the Commissioner of Transportation. Support for the harbor master program is currently provided through ConnDOT's State Maritime Office. If Raised Bill No. 5289 envisions that existing functions of the Maritime Office would be assumed by the DECD or Connecticut Port Authority, consideration should be given to the impact of this change on the harbor master program. The Board recommends that prior to any legislative change that would affect the State Maritime Office, consideration should be given to the impact of that change on the harbor master program. The new legislation should enhance and revitalize the program.

It is our hope that these comments and recommendations will be considered by the Transportation Committee as part of the public hearing process on Raised Bill No. 5289.

If you have any questions or desire any additional information, please contact me at (203) 984-5339 or [pintoj@optonline.com](mailto:pintoj@optonline.com).

Sincerely,

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35 Winfield Court  
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JTP/gs

cc:

CHMA Board of Directors  
Mr. Charles Beck, ConnDOT, Transportation Maritime Manager  
Mr. Rob Klee, Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Mr. James P. Redeker, Commissioner of Transportation  
Ms. Catherine Smith, Commissioner of Economic and Community Development

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