

## Neeley, Nick

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**From:** ToDMacPac@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 04, 2014 4:37 PM  
**To:** Neeley, Nick  
**Subject:** Senate Joint Resoution No. 23

**To: Members of the Transportation Committee --**

Unfortunately I will be unable to attend tomorrow's public hearing on SJR No. 23 proposing an amendment to the State Constitution limiting use of monies contained in the Special Transportation Fund, so would ask that this advance testimony be incorporated a part of the hearing record.

*I support the spirit and essence of the proposed Resolution:* the need to segregate our fuel tax revenues, protect them from being swept to meet the State's general funding requirements, and to earmark them exclusively to fund improvements/repairs to the sources from which they were derived. ***That is, to primarily fund improvements to the State's transportation infrastructure*** -- our roads, highways, bridges, rail networks, and similar. Historically I understand that fuel tax revenues equate to over \$800M/year and can be well invested to bring our transportation infrastructure up to speed, an essential undertaking given the current state of our transport systems and networks.

***There is, however, another critical need that cannot be overlooked, a need that has been historically acknowledged and also funded from fuel tax revenues.*** A not-insignificant portion of un-refunded gasoline tax monies is derived from marine fuel charges. Indeed the tax revenues from this source total some \$6-7 million annually -- and while only equating to < 1% of total fuel tax revenues, they have provided a critical source for essential funding for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). For almost a decade up through 2009, roughly half of this pool of funds (~ \$3M) was dedicated to support waterways management -- water quality, fishing, boating, water safety, etc. The lack of comparable funds in recent years has stretched the capabilities of the DEEP and today we are ignoring many, critical inland water-related issues, exacerbated by the looming threat posed by *aquatic invasive species* and similar unmet environmental risks and requirements.

Accordingly, ***I would urge the Committee to include a proviso that the full or a proportional amount (~ 50%+) of un-refunded gasoline tax revenues from boating fuel charges be earmarked to specifically protect and enhance the State's water bodies and waterways,*** for which only limited funding otherwise exists. To resume applying revenue tax dollars derived from marine sources to carry forward DEEP's mission makes solid sense and can go a long way to helping ensure that the health and quality of our natural water resources are not short-changed and indeed provide a living legacy for the generations to follow.

As with our transportation infrastructure, the health of our waterways has been too long ignored; applying tax revenues derived from boating sources to fund boating-related requirements is a natural and essential step to meeting this need. Thank you for your consideration. Respectfully submitted,

Jim McAlister  
Chair, Candlewood Watershed Initiative (CWI)  
Point, Candlewood Community Leaders Network (CLN)  
Co-Founder, Candlewood United (CU)  
Advocate, Connecticut's Waters

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