

Testimony for the Conserv and Dev Appropriations Subcomm re Hatchery Funding

From: Rebecca Gladych
Teacher: Bridgeport Public High School

As a teacher, I cannot emphasize enough how important the Kensington Hatchery is to the future of our students. The award winning **Salmon-in-Schools Program** allows urban youths to witness, for the first time, a tiny living egg, that hatches into an alvin with a yolk sac for life support, and transforms into a tiny fish! I see my students' eyes and minds become opened to a whole new realm of possibilities! Pictures in textbooks are not the same! If you choose to let this incredible resource be terminated, **6,000 Connecticut students in 60 different schools** will no longer have this opportunity! The **Trout in the Classroom Program** will also be eliminated, and impact **9,000 schoolchildren in 110 schools!** The future of our children depends on programs like these! Students develop a sense of environmental awareness due to these programs!

I fully support keeping Kensington Hatchery operational and removing it from the list of cuts proposed in the governor's budget because this hatchery generates more money for our state than it costs, and it provides unique benefits that would be forever lost. The current stocking programs generate roughly 2 million angler hours and approximately \$60 million in revenue. The closing of Kensington would eliminate less than \$195,000 in a multi-billion dollar budget, and would be extremely poor economic policy. Our other two hatcheries are operating at maximum and will be unable to make up for the loss of Kensington's capacity and unique elements such as chilled water capability and uniquely favorable well water. Closing Kensington Hatchery would end the brood stock salmon stocking program in CT, and along with it up to 7,000 Atlantic salmon fishing trips per year. Valuable genetic traits defining Connecticut River salmon will also be lost forever. Our successful Seeforellen Brown trout strain will be lost, as will much of the trophy brown trout and sea run trout programs that generate significant tourism revenue.

Keeping Kensington Hatchery operational makes sense economically, educationally and environmentally.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Gladych
Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture High School
Bridgeport, CT