



**Testimony of Save the Sound,  
a bi-state program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment,  
before the Environment Committee on February 4, 2015  
in support of:**

**H.B. No. 5026  
An Act Providing Persons Age Sixty-Five or Older with Permanent Fishing Licenses**

Dear Sen. Kennedy, Rep. Albis, and members of the Environment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 5026. On behalf of CFE/Save the Sound, I would like to express our support this bill, which would provide senior citizens with lifetime fishing licenses, for a number of reasons.

First, streamlining the process will allow our senior citizens to spend more time at their favorite river, lake, pond, or Long Island Sound spot without concern for the renewal status of their license.

Second, lifetime licenses reduce the amount of paperwork Department of Energy & Environmental Protection staff need to process. Even with the Online Sportsmen Licensing system, organizing materials for the more than 100,000 Connecticut fishers is time consuming. Allowing those over 65 to obtain a permanent license in one transaction will help reduce this load. Additionally, inland and marine fishing licenses are free for senior citizens, so the main goal here is to reduce the amount of paperwork.

Third, lifetime fishing licenses will not cause a decline in Connecticut's funding for conservation efforts from the federal government. The Sport Fishing Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson Act, 1950) provides conservation funds according to a state's land and water acreage and number of licensed fishers. Because more than thirty other states offer lifetime licenses in some form, US Fish & Wildlife Service already calculate them into those states' number, a calculation based on life expectancy. Connecticut receives about \$3.5 million annually from the Dingell-Johnson Act program. DEEP, for its own calculations, could just as easily mirror what US FWS already does.

And finally, Connecticut offered this very program until October 1, 2009. Returning to lifetime licenses would benefit both fishers and the state government. Less paperwork, more fishing.

Sincerely,

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*Save the Sound is a bi-state program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment, a non-profit organization with over 5,500 members working to protect and improve the land, air, and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. Learn more at [www.ctenvironment.org](http://www.ctenvironment.org).*