

I am writing to support of House Bills 5720 and 5722.

**H.B. No. 5720: AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DOUBLE THE CAPACITY FOR SHELLFISH SAMPLE TESTING AND TO ESTABLISH A SITE FOR SHELLFISH SAMPLE TESTING EAST OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER.**

The Stonington Shellfish Commission is committed to meeting all the water sampling requirements of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance. This commitment involves the collection of several hundred water samples during each year. Samples are collected in both Town of Stonington waters and adjacent waters managed by the State of Connecticut. These samples are collected by volunteers using the Stonington Shellfish Commission's boat. The samples are then driven by volunteers over 70 miles to the Bureau of Aquaculture Lab in Milford. Early in 2014 the Bureau of Aquaculture promised to conduct a once-per-week courier service to help with the sample transportation. After a few early courier runs, the Bureau of Aquaculture discontinued the service, leaving Stonington, Groton and Waterford/East Lyme to bring the samples to the Milford Lab.

This forces us into the situation where we are consuming all our resources meeting the minimum number of samples required to keep our current recreational beds open. There is no opportunity to conduct additional water sampling to expand recreational shellfishing areas. The creation of additional water testing capacity, particularly a facility located in the eastern part of the state would ease this burden and create a more robust water testing program.

**H.B. No. 5722: AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TAKING OF CERTAIN OYSTERS THAT ARE TWO AND ONE-HALF INCHES IN LENGTH.**

The Stonington Shellfish Commission supports the local oyster grower's desire to take cultivated oysters that are two and one-half inches in length. Oysters that are spawned in a hatchery and cultivated in cages should not be forced to meet the three-inch limit for oysters grown naturally in public waters.

Donald L. Murphy, Chairman  
Stonington Shellfish Commission  
58 James St.  
Stonington, CT 06378