

I am Michael Piacentini, a Connecticut resident for more than 45 years. I am writing to express how important it is to me for the state to not close the Kensington Hatchery or reduce spending toward our states fisheries in any way, shape or form. If anything, the state legislature should allocate more funding towards the state fisheries, not less. The recreational revenue generated through fishing of all types throughout the state is immensely significant.

As you are well aware, more than 500 classrooms throughout the state presently contain either SIC (Salmon In the Classroom) or TIC (Trout In the Classroom) tanks in their classrooms. This is a highly educational and beneficial program that meets all modern scientific scholastic criteria. It is run and funded through volunteer cooperation, teachers and students, and the Ct. DEEP which provides eggs for these programs, all of which come from the Kensington Hatchery. I feel that educational programs such as these should be encouraged and increased rather than being eradicated.

The fish that the hatchery produces also keeps open water anglers excited and fishing throughout the cold months of winter with the possibility of catching Atlantic salmon and sea-run brown trout, both of which are raised in the Kensington Hatchery. As a resident who pays for a license each year, I strongly urge you to keep the hatchery open. It produces some of the state's highest quality salmonids with the past two state records for brown trout being fish that were raised at Kensington.

I realize that many who serve us in Hartford may not be fishermen or hunters. This is evident as this is the third time that the hatchery has been threatened however, make no mistake, please hear us loud and clear that; not only do the sportsmen of the state of Connecticut want this hatchery open, we want the state legislature to allocate more funding to DEEP to better protect our fisheries and fishing waters throughout the state so that future generations can enjoy clean water and the sporting traditions that Connecticut residents are proud of.

Fishing, hunting and the beautiful state parks that we are fortunate to possess in Connecticut are a true asset to our state and are beneficial not only aesthetically but financially as well and are also an integral part of the states heritage. The DEEP does an excellent job on the budget that they receive however, at present; they are understaffed and need more funding to properly protect our already dwindling natural resources.

I am asking that you keep the hatchery open, do not cut the pheasant program, do not make budget cuts to the state parks or any other outdoor activities in Connecticut. I am also asking that you instill better legislation to protect and increase our fisheries and other natural resources throughout the state and to not continue to threaten our outdoor resources but to work to augment them.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter,

Michael Piacentini