



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing – February 4, 2015
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Robert J. Klee
and by Deputy Commissioner Susan Whalen

House Bill No. 5030 – AN ACT CONCERNING HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY AT STATE-OWNED FISHING AREAS

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding **House Bill No. 5030 – AN ACT CONCERNING HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY AT STATE-OWNED FISHING AREAS**. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

DEEP is committed to increasing access to all our facilities, and is making every effort to improve access for all citizens. There are currently 34 ADA compliant fishing piers and similar structures on inland waters across our state, approximately 50 more providing access for fishing in the state's coastal waters, and 24 state-owned ADA compliant boat launch facilities. Please see link for list of freshwater fishing areas with access for persons with disabilities

http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2696&q=322674&deepNav_GID=1630.

DEEP has concerns about what is meant by, "Any area of such lands that are open to the public for the purpose of fishing...". The bill would expand Section 26-16 of the Connecticut General States with the following language "Any area of such lands that are open to the public for the purpose of fishing shall be accessible to persons with physical disabilities whenever it is possible to engineer such access."

DEEP, when designing new public access fishing areas and when renovating existing ones, always includes appropriate ADA compliant components where feasible. Since fishable waters exist in DEEP owned and managed Parks, Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, and Boating Access Areas across the state, the universe of lands potentially affected by this bill is extensive.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Robert LaFrance, DEEP's Director of Governmental Affairs, at 860.424.3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov (or, Elizabeth McAuliffe, DEEP Legislative Liaison, at 860.424.3458 or Elizabeth.McAuliffe@ct.gov).

