

Memo

To: Environment Committee
From: Tanya A. Hughes, Executive Director
Date: January 30, 2015
Re: **HB 5030, AN ACT CONCERNING HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY AT STATE-OWNED FISHING AREAS**

CHRO, Connecticut's antidiscrimination enforcement agency, supports HB 5030 and the equal access it will provide to the physically disabled people of CT. We believe this bill provides further equality to all citizens of the state who wish to participate in outdoor activities in the beautiful parks that we have here.

Who are the physically disabled? They are those born with a congenital disorder or hereditary predisposition to a condition that advances to a disability, people who have been injured through trauma whether at work, in car accidents or in the military service of our country. Then there is disease which need not present as a sudden development, but more commonly as part of the aging process. And we are an aging population.

We would ask you to think of people in your own lives who have, as they age, had to give up activities they have enjoyed part or all of their lives. In the case of people who fish this is more than a hobby, it is a chance to get out in the fresh air and get some physical exercise. Beyond this is the social interaction that keeps us all involved, hopeful and in touch. Even for those who may enjoy fishing by themselves the chance to commune with nature and have time to clear their heads and enjoy the outdoors is essential to their continued well being physically, mentally and emotionally.

The Commission is not just an enforcement agency, we are also advocates for equality through progressive thought and action. As with this bill we prefer to see a barrier eliminated rather than a complaint filed.

We salute Rep. Fritz and the Environment Committee for bringing this legislation forward.